

FOOTBALL STARS OF 1974

Hal Bock and Ben Olan

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

HAL BOCK has become one of the nation's most prolific authors of sports books. In addition to the co-authorship of **FOOTBALL STARS OF 1974**, two other recent books carry his byline. They are *The Big Whistle*, the story of hockey referee Bill Chadwick, and *Save! Hockey's Brave Goalies*. Bock is also a valued member of The Associated Press sports staff and has covered pro football's Super Bowl, baseball's World Series and hockey's Stanley Cup championship.

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FOOTBALL STARS OF 1974

Hal Bock and Ben Olan



PYRAMID BOOKS



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FOOTBALL STARS OF 1974

A PYRAMID BOOK

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*To the Bock and Olan families . . .
the best teams we've ever seen.*

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REVIEW OF THE 1973 SEASON

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

Until the Minnesota Vikings flattened out in the Super Bowl and were flattened by Miami 24-7, they in general—and Fran Tarkenton in particular—had reached great heights during the 1973 National Football League season.

"We had a great year," commented linebacker Jeff Siemon. "Unfortunately, it had to end on a sad note."

The earlier notes had been happier.

Most notable was the 12-2 regular-season record, matching the club's best in history. Along the way, there was the clinching of the NFC's Central Division title after only nine games—all victories, the earliest clinching since the NFL adopted a 14-game schedule in 1961, the Vikings' first season.

And there was the steady play of the irrepressible Tarkenton, the much-maligned quarterback who had been dubbed a "loser" and a "choker," because in his 12 previous pro seasons, he never had played on a championship team.

Surprisingly, Fran the Scram passed fewer times in 1973 than during any of his previous seasons. Also, his passes gained only 2,113 yards, the fewest since his rookie season of 1961.

But his passing was the most efficient of his career. He was intercepted only seven times, the fewest ever. His interception percentage was 2.5, Fran's lowest ever, and his completion percentage was 61.7, Tarkenton's highest ever.

The Scram was accurate and cool as he directed the Vikings to victories over Oakland, Chicago, Green Bay, Detroit, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Los Angeles,

Cleveland and Detroit before Atlanta ended the nine-game winning streak with a 20-14 decision in a hard-fought, nationally televised game. Then the Vikings beat Chicago, lost to Cincinnati and whipped Green Bay and the New York Giants, completing their regular-season with the knowledge that they had fully erased the memory of their disappointing 7-7 record of 1972.

Tarkenton, of course, was not the only standout for the Vikings. There was John Gilliam, the fleet wide receiver who averaged better than 20 yards per reception. There was Chuck Foreman, the sensational rookie running back from the University of Miami who slithered his way for more than 800 yards and provided Minnesota with its first strong outside threat in years. There was cornerback Bobby Bryant, the NFC leader in interceptions. There was the usual bone-crunch tackling of the "Purple Gang" defensive line of Carl Eller, Alan Page, Jim Marshall and Gary Larsen. There was the consistent play of the underrated offensive line of Grady Alderman, Ron Yary, Ed White, Milt Sunde and Mick Tingelhoff. There was the head-hunting hitting of the linebacking trio of Siemon, Wally Hilgenberg and Roy Winston. There was the return to form of kicker Fred Cox, and there was the spiritual influence of Karl Kassulke, the veteran defensive back who was paralyzed and nearly killed in a motorcycle accident prior to the season.

Minnesota's opening round opponent in the playoffs was Washington's "Over-The-Hill-Gang." The Redskins, coached by that eternal optimist, George Allen, had to settle for the wild card berth despite tying for the NFC East title with Dallas, each with 10-4 records.

Although Washington finished third in the conference in scoring, and Minnesota wound up sixth, the game actually figured as a defensive struggle, because the Vikings had yielded the fewest points (168) and touchdowns (15) in the NFC, while the Redskins permitted only 198 points and led the NFL in sacking opposing passers (53) and the NFC in interceptions (26).

It followed that pattern in the first half, with Washington leading 7-3 at intermission after holding the Vikings to nine total yards and no first downs in the opening quarter.

But in the locker room at halftime, the veteran Carl Eller really fired up the Vikings. "Carl was throwing the blackboards around," said running back Oscar Reed. "We were really tight in the first half, and he told us we were really going to have to get off our behinds and play football . . . only he said it in a little stronger language than that."

Heeding Eller's advice, the Vikings came charging out for the second half. Reed, who had been characterized as a fumbler in the past, was outstanding. He had converted a pass from Tarkenton into a 50-yard gain to set up the first-half field goal, then bulled his way for 46 yards preceding Minnesota's first touchdown, a two-yard run by Bill Brown in the third quarter.

Touchdown strikes of 28 and six yards from Tarkenton to the elusive Gilliam in the fourth period gave the Vikings a comfortable cushion and offset a gallant performance by Washington quarterback Billy Kilmer, who played the entire game on offense despite having been hospitalized earlier in the week with a stomach disorder. Kilmer tossed a 28-yard scoring pass to Roy Jefferson with less than six minutes remaining, then had the Redskins in scoring range in the closing minutes, but the Vikings stopped his desperation passes and held on for a 24-20 triumph.

The other opening-round playoff game matched Dallas' co-East champions against Los Angeles, surprise winner in the West with a 12-2 record. The Rams, under new Coach Chuck Knox, had built the most potent offense in the NFC, totaling 388 points, mainly on the strength of a devastating passing combination of John Hadl to Harold Jackson and an awesome running game paced by Larry McCutcheon and Jim Bertelsen.

Hadl, acquired in the off-season from San Diego, and the diminutive Jackson, obtained from Philadelphia in the Roman Gabriel deal, collaborated for 13

touchdown passes, while McCutcheon and Bertelsen, both starters for the first time in the pros, gained nearly a total of 2,000 yards on the ground.

The Rams not only were the No. 1 scoring unit in the NFC, they also were No. 1 in overall defense, allowing an average of 210.8 yards per game, including a conference low of 90.7 yards rushing.

The Cowboys, meanwhile, guided by Roger Staubach's passing and Calvin Hill's running, were the second highest scoring team in the conference with 382 points, and were second in overall defense, yielding an average of 247.6 yards per game. Staubach won the passing title in the NFC for the second time in three years, connecting on 179 of 286 attempts for 2,428 yards and 23 touchdowns. Hill gained 1,142 yards rushing, only two yards behind conference leader John Brockington of Green Bay.

The Rams, plagued by opening-minute jitters, gave the Cowboys two touchdowns on miscues in the first 47 seconds and never caught up, although they managed to close the deficit to 17-16 with 9:37 remaining. Staubach then put the Cowboys safely ahead, rifling the ball 23 yards to rookie Drew Pearson, who outfought two Los Angeles defenders for it at midfield and streaked into the end zone for his second touchdown. Toni Fritsch added a field goal in the final two minutes, and Dallas emerged with a 27-16 victory.

But it was a costly victory. Hill suffered a dislocated elbow, and tackle Bob Lilly, the heart of the Cowboys' defense, pulled a hamstring, and both were forced to miss the NFC title game against Minnesota. It was the first time that Lilly had been sidelined during his illustrious NFL career, breaking his 271-game playing streak.

Their absences naturally hurt Dallas. Without Hill the Cowboys' offense sputtered, and without Lilly, their defense was not nearly as tough as usual.

The Vikings broke on top 10-0 by halftime on a 44-yard field goal by Cox and a five-yard touchdown

run by Foreman, capping an 86-yard, time-consuming, 14-play drive engineered by the masterful Tarkenton.

Dallas got back into contention quickly in the third period when rookie Golden Richards bolted 63 yards for a touchdwn on a punt return, but Tarkenton wasted little time in re-establishing Minnesota's advantage. He hit Gilliam winging down the middle between defensive backs Cornell Green and Mel Renfro. The ball, thrown about as far as Tarkenton could heave it, traveled 50 yards from the line of scrimmage and about 60 yards in all. Gilliam grabbed it at the Dallas four-yard line and staggered into the end zone standing up for the decisive touchdown.

The Vikings got another long touchdown play in the fourth quarter when cornerback Bobby Bryant gambled and won on an attempted pass from Staubach to Bob Hayes at the sidelines. Bryant cut in front of Hayes, intercepted the ball and raced down the sidelines for a 63-yard touchdown.

The Vikings eventually won 27-10, and afterward, Tarkenton chirped: "I want all you writers to find another quarterback to call a loser."

He had put egg on the faces of his critics, directing the Vikings to the NFC championship. And he did it with some unusual play-calling, passing on first down 10 times against the surprised Cowboys.

The victory sent the Vikings into the Super Bowl showdown against Miami.

In addition to Staubach and Brockington, the NFC's individual leaders included Washington's Larry Brown in touchdowns with 14, Los Angeles' David Ray in scoring with 130 points and Philadelphia's Harold Carmichael in receiving with 67 catches for 1,116 yards.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

Collectively,
the Miami Dol-

phins were the story in the AFC in 1973. Individually,

it was O.J. Simpson.

The Dolphins, the most dominating team in pro football since the Green Bay Packers reigned under Vince Lombardi in the mid-1960s, did not duplicate their miraculous 14-0 regular-season record of 1972 nor their 17-0 overall mark, but they did win the AFC championship for the third consecutive year and the Super Bowl for the second straight time.

"I wouldn't call it a dynasty," said Miami owner Joe Robbie. "I feel if you start calling something a dynasty, it starts crumbling the moment you say it. That's when you start resting on your laurels. We have only tied the Packers' record (of two Super Bowl victories in a row). That gives us a new challenge for 1974—to come back and beat it."

After 1974, with the loss of key players to the WFL, the effectiveness of the Dolphins may be seriously impaired.

"Going 17-0 like we did in 1972 is something I'll look back on when I'm old and be proud of it," said Dolphins' Coach Don Shula. "But I'm even prouder of this team because it had to overcome a lot. For this team to win the Super Bowl back-to-back, it has taken us one step farther. Winning it against the kind of competition we faced makes me so proud of this team."

"It's not my job to say we're the best, although I feel that way," he added.

The other teams in the AFC had to feel that way, too, after the Dolphins rolled to the best record in the

conference (12-2), losing only to Oakland 12-7 on four field goals by ageless George Blanda and 16-3 to Baltimore, giving up only one touchdown to the Colts.

Other than those games, the Dolphins were dominant. They scored well over twice as many points as their opponents (343 to 150), their points against total was the lowest in the league, they allowed the fewest touchdowns (15) and they were the toughest to pass against in the AFC, yielding only 1,290 yards.

They were a smooth, assembly-like offensive machine, unemotionally grinding out yardage, and a well-coordinated defensive group, constantly choking off opposing team's attacks.

"They block well and are a cohesive unit," confessed Minnesota's great defensive end, Carl Eller, after the Dolphins had smothered the Vikings 24-7 in Super Bowl VIII.

"They just ran the ball down our throats and we couldn't stop them," added Vikings' linebacker Wally Hilgenberg.

Singularly, that also would have been an emphatic description of what Simpson, Buffalo's brilliant runner, did to Bills' opponents. Even though Buffalo rivals knew that Simpson would carry the ball most of the time, they couldn't stop him.

He carried the ball more times (332) for more yardage (2,003) than any runner in the history of pro football. Both those figures shattered NFL records held by former Cleveland Browns' star Jimmy Brown.

Simpson also set numerous other records, such as gaining 100 or more yards 11 times in one season, rushing for 250 yards in one game, carrying 39 times in a single game and grinding out 200 or more yards in three different games.

With Simpson leading the way, the Bills became the first NFL team to surpass the 3,000-yard rushing barrier, winding up with 3,088 yards. And they finished the season with nine victories—one more than the three previous seasons combined.

But O.J. failed to reach his most coveted goal in

football. "My goal is to be on a world championship team," he said. "Then there could be nothing else I could ask for in football. I won the Heisman Trophy, the rushing crown, but the Super Bowl is the ultimate goal. At Buffalo, we are dedicated to attaining that."

But the Bills didn't quite make the playoffs last season, failing just short with their 9-5 record.

The opening AFC playoff game sent Oakland, Western Division champion with a 9-4-1 record against Pittsburgh, the "Wild Card" team and co-champion with Cincinnati in the Central Division, each with 10-4 records.

Although the Raiders led the AFC in both offense and defense, they still needed a victory over Denver in their final game to win the West and reach the playoffs. The Raiders' offense amassed 4,773 yards, their defense permitted only 3,160 yards and they had the best defense against the rush, allowing 1,470 yards.

Also, their young quarterback, Ken Stabler, who did not get the starting job until about a quarter of the season had ended, finished with a flourish and became the AFC's top passer, completing 163 of 260 aerials for 1,997 yards and 14 touchdowns.

The Steelers, meanwhile, led the NFL in interceptions with 37 and had scored the most points of any of the AFC's playoff teams (347).

The game was a rematch of the 1972 AFC semifinal in which the Steelers had beaten the Raiders 13-7 on a freak pass play that resulted in a touchdown by Franco Harris in the closing seconds.

This time, however, Oakland was not to be denied. Despite having the worst record of any of the eight teams in the playoffs, the Raiders were hot, carrying a five-game winning streak into action against Pittsburgh.

They made it six in a row, brushing past the injury-riddled Steelers 33-14 as Stabler connected on 14 of 17 passes for 142 yards. Marv Hubbard carried 20 times for 91 yards and two touchdowns, cornerback Willie Brown dashed 54 yards for a touchdown with an intercepted pass and the 46-year-old Blanda equalled an

NFL playoff record by kicking four field goals.

In the other playoff opener, Miami's methodical Dolphins met Cincinnati's young, upstart Bengals.

After a slow start, the Bengals, nursed by cagey Paul Brown, and featuring such rookies as wide receiver Isaac Curtis and running back Charles "Boobie" Clark, plus young pros in quarterback Ken Anderson and running back Essex Johnson, roared down the stretch with six consecutive victories. Both Johnson and Clark barely missed the 1,000-yard mark in rushing, while Anderson wound up as the AFC's No. 3 passer, behind Stabler and Miami's Bob Griese.

But the Bengals' relative inexperience and a costly injury to Johnson in the first period proved their undoing against the Dolphins. Miami stormed to an early 21-3 lead on a 13-yard touchdown pass from Griese to Paul Warfield and short scoring runs by Mercury Morris and Larry Csonka, before the Bengals rallied with 13 points in the final 3½ minutes of the first half.

Miami's defense stiffened in the second half, however, shutting off the Cincinnati offense, while Griese clicked with a touchdown pass to Jim Mandich, and Garo Yepremian kicked two field goals for a 34-16 victory.

"We were just blown out, I guess, is the best way to describe it," said Brown. "I have no regrets. They're the world champions. We had a good season, but it ended today."

The triumph put the Dolphins into the AFC final against Oakland, the team that had snapped their 18-game winning streak earlier in the season.

This time, the pulverizing running of Csonka, the ball-control tactics of Griese and a tight-fisted defense enabled the Dolphins to gain revenge with a 27-10 victory. Csonka, the crunching power runner, blasted his way for 117 yards and three touchdowns on dashes of 11, two and two yards, setting an AFC playoff record. Griese, calling a conservative game, passed only six times while sending his running backs into the line 53 times. And Miami's defense limited the Raiders to a 25-

yard scoring pass from Stabler to Mike Siani and a 21-yard field goal by Blanda.

The turning point came in the fourth period. With Miami leading 20-10 and Oakland needing inches for a first down on a fourth-down play at its 45, Hubbard was sent barreling into the line, but he fumbled. Stabler picked up the ball and tried to circle left end for the first down. However, Curtis Johnson nailed him for a three-yard loss, giving the ball to Miami. The Dolphins then marched downfield for their final touchdown, marched off the field triumphantly and marched into the Super Bowl for the third consecutive year.

They were a team with a superb attitude and endless skills. Under the tough but respected Shula, they then went on and equalled the Super Bowl record established by the Packers under the tough but respected Lombardi. It is a mark they will set their sights on breaking this year.

"We really played our best football of the season in the playoffs," Shula said.

Individuals other than Simpson and Stabler who played outstanding ball during the regular season included: Denver's Floyd Little, the AFC leader in touchdowns with 13; Pittsburgh's Roy Gerela, the conference's leading scorer with 123 points, and Houston's Fred Willis, who became the first running back since the 1930s to lead in pass receptions, grabbing 57. Oddly, the runner-up to Willis also was a running back, Ed Podolak of Kansas City, with 55 catches.

THE SUPER BOWL The National Football League likes to bill the Super Bowl as the ultimate confrontation of the two powerhouses of profes-

sional football who, if they were to follow the script, would stage a titanic struggle to determine the championship of Pete Rozelle's world.

Now all that is very nice and the media certainly cooperates with a week-long stream of stories that is easily the most flagrant case of overkill in sports journalism today. But to justify the pre-game buildup, you'd have to have a game decided in the final 10 seconds by a 95-yard run. Unfortunately for the scene-setters, the Miami Dolphins just aren't cut out for that kind of last-second heroics.

The Dolphins are a methodical machine who grind out points and wear down opponents. And that's exactly the way coach Don Shula's team won its second straight Super Bowl. Methodically.

The turning point of Super Bowl VIII may have occurred before a block was made or a football thrown in anger. That would have been when referee Ben Dreith flipped a coin and Miami won the toss and elected to receive the kickoff. Minnesota's highly-regarded Vikings were in trouble right there.

The Vikings were champions of the National Football Conference. They had turned around from a 7-7 season in 1972 to a powerhouse in a year. They won the first nine games they played, became the first team to qualify for the playoffs, and finished with an impressive 12-2 log. They had an awesome defense headed by behemoths like Alan Page and Carl Eller up front and an imaginative offense piloted by Fran Tarkenton.

The Vikings opened the playoffs against Washington and were trailing 7-3 at halftime. Then Eller did a number on a blackboard in the dressing room to punctuate a little pep talk and the Vikings went back and wiped out Washington. Dallas was next and there was no need for any blackboard destruction to help the Vikings to that victory.

That put Minnesota into the Super Bowl against Miami. The Dolphins reached the dream game for the third straight year but did not carry the invincible tag this time. A year before, they were unbeaten and when

they beat Washington in the Super Bowl, it climaxed a record-breaking 17-0 season. This time, they were 12-2 during the regular season, including an embarrassing loss to one of the NFL's flagrant have-nots, the Baltimore Colts.

The Dolphins sharpened up with playoff victories against Cincinnati and Oakland, the latter avenging their other regular season loss. That set the stage for the Super Bowl and Minnesota.

For a week, the writers busied themselves with breathless accounts of the Vikings' training facilities at Houston, including a virtual play-by-play of sparrows in the shower room. Then there was the great debate over whether Dolphin players should bring their mothers and girl friends along to the title game at the club's expense.

America survived a week of that and as a reward, the teams got around to playing the title game. That's when Dreith flipped the coin and the Vikings got in more trouble than those sparrows ever could have created.

Jake Scott returned the opening kickoff 31 yards, giving Miami excellent field position to start with. From there, Miami marched to the opening touchdown of the game, using 10 plays to get it. On nine of those plays, Larry Csonka and Mercury Morris took turns running at the Vikes. Only once did the drive threaten to stall and that was at the very start. Faced with a third and four, Bob Griese put the ball in the air and completed a 13-yard pass to Jim Mandich, keeping the Dolphins moving.

With the score 7-0, Minnesota got its first chance to move the ball. On a third and five—an almost identical situation as the one Griese had faced moments earlier—Tarkenton completed a four-yard pass. That made it fourth and one and meant Minnesota had to kick the ball away. By the time they got it back again, the score was 14-0.

Again, Miami used 10 plays to score. This time, Griese completed two passes. The rest of the time, it

was Csonka, Morris and Jim Kiick running the football right down Minnesota's throats. When Kiick barrelled into the endzone for the second TD, the ball game, for all practical purposes, was over. And when it ended, Tarkenton had handled the football exactly three times. That coin flip had been the turning point after all.

Garo Yepremian kicked a 28-yard field goal in the second quarter for a 17-0 Miami lead. Griese tried three more passes along the way, giving him half a dozen attempts in the first half. He put the ball in the air only once more for the rest of the game, preferring to let Csonka lug it. The Dolphins finished with 60 offensive plays for the game and 53 of them were runs. Csonka gained 145 yards in 33 carries and scored his second touchdown of the game in the third period. By the time Minnesota got on the scoreboard in the final quarter, it was a case of much too little, much too late.

In the dressing room, a beaming Shula accepted the Super Bowl Trophy from Rozelle and risked an assessment. "We are," he said of his awesome football machine, "the best team ever."

The man might have something there. The Vikings certainly thought so.

RESULTS OF PREVIOUS SUPER BOWLS

1967—	Green Bay 35, Kansas City 10
1968—	Green Bay 33, Oakland 14
1969—	New York Jets 16, Baltimore 7
1970—	Kansas City 23, Minnesota 7
1971—	Baltimore 16, Dallas 13
1972—	Dallas 24, Miami 3
1973—	Miami 14, Washington 7

PREVIEW OF THE 1974 SEASON

AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

Comparisons between the Miami Dolphins and Green Bay Packers were inevitable after the Dolphins had swept past the Minnesota Vikings 24-7 in Super Bowl VIII. The lopsided victory had enabled the precision-like Dolphins to join the Packers as the only two-time winners of pro football's post-season extravaganza, Green Bay having won the first two and Miami the last two.

"I don't give a damn what Green Bay did," snapped Jim Langer, the Dolphins' center. "If we're not a great football team, then I don't know what one is. I'd just like to play them and settle the issue. Of course, we can't, but if we could, we'd beat them."

"I think we now can consider ourselves comparable to the Packers," said Larry Csonka, Miami's pulverizing runner and the Super Bowl hero with a record 145 yards on 33 carries against Minnesota's mauling defense. "We had to reserve our opinion before the game, but no more."

Actually, the Dolphins should consider themselves superior to the Packers. After all, the Packers played in only two Super Bowl games, the games they won in 1967 (35-10) over Kansas City and 1968 (33-14) over Oakland. The Dolphins have played in the last three, losing to Dallas 24-3 in 1972, but beating Washington 14-7 in 1973 and Minnesota last season.

Also, there is no reason to suspect they won't make it four in a row—and three straight victories. There is no team in pro football that can match the Dolphins' incredible 32-2 record over the past two seasons, in-

cluding the amazing 17-0 mark in 1972. And there doesn't appear to be a team in pro football that can yet match the overall talents and skills of the miracle men from Miami.

They are a proud group, and the challenge of trying to surpass the Packers' record should spur them on to even greater heights despite defections of key Miami players in 1975 to the WFL.

Buffalo's surprising Bills, riding the crest of O. J. Simpson's miraculous 2,000-yard rushing record, provided Miami's closest competition in the East Division last season, finishing three games behind the Dolphins. But the Bills don't figure to get another 2,000-yard performance from Simpson, and they still haven't found a reliable quarterback. Therefore, they probably will fall behind the New York Jets in the East Division race this season.

The Jets, with Charley Winner having replaced his father-in-law, Weeb Ewbank, as head coach, and with quarterback Joe Namath hopefully in good shape, should climb into second place in the East, although they are not yet ready to challenge Miami for the title.

In the Central Division, the Pittsburgh Steelers and Cincinnati Bengals, who battled to a dead heat last season, again loom as the top contenders. But this time, the Steelers should finish on top by themselves, provided they don't get wracked by injuries as they did in 1973.

In the West, Oakland, which held off title bids by Denver and Kansas City last year, figures to do the same this season. The Raiders led the AFC in both offense and defense in 1973—and it's difficult to ignore picking a team like that, although Denver is rapidly on the rise.

The AFC's new coaches, in addition to Winner, are Tommy Prothro at San Diego, succeeding Harland Svare and Ron Waller, and Sid Gillman at Houston, starting the season in place of Bill Peterson.

The predicted order of finish:

East Division	Central Division	West Division
Miami	Pittsburgh	Oakland
New York	Cincinnati	Denver
Buffalo	Cleveland	Kansas City
New England	Houston	San Diego
Baltimore		

EASTERN DIVISION

"I don't think you'll ever hear coaches talk about dynasties," says Miami Coach Don Shula. "The competition each year is too great."

Even if Shula doesn't like talking about dynasties, he nevertheless has established one at Miami. The Dolphins have won the East championship three straight years with devastating ease. But even though they keep winning, Shula never lets up.

"He's always down there in Florida, studying films over and over, getting ready for the next season," said Larry Csonka, the Dolphins' super runner.

Shula's forceful leadership is considered a major factor in the Dolphins' success and their chances for all-time greatness. But a coach also has to have talent—and Shula has it in abundance until 1975, anyway.

He has the power-running Csonka, the swift and skittery Mercury Morris, the resourceful Jim Kiick, the conservative and knowledgeable Bob Griese, the quick and elusive Paul Warfield, a solid and dependable offensive line and a reliable and unbending defensive unit.

The New York Jets, losers under Weeb Ewbank last season, should be winners under Charley Winner this year. Winner, provided he can apply some magical cure to keep Joe Namath healthy, has the ingredients for a winning team. But Namath is the key.

When Joe had his shoulder smashed in the second game of the 1973 season against Baltimore, the Jets had to rely on Al Woodall. That wasn't too bad, until Woodall got hurt, and they were forced to go with un-

tested rookie Bill Demory. That really hurt, and the end result was a 4-10 record.

Any team with Namath at quarterback, Emerson Boozer and John Riggins at running backs, and Jerome Barkum, Rich Caster and Eddie Bell as receivers, has to be respected offensively, and the Jets are. Defensive-ly, there are some holes, and No. 1 draft choice, tackle Carl Barzilauksas from Indiana, could plug one of them.

O. J. Simpson's phenomenal 2,000-yard rushing record and the fact that Buffalo won nine games last season—one more victory than they had amassed in their previous three seasons combined—were widely publicized last year. But little mention was made of the Bills' deficiency at quarterback, where rookie Joe Ferguson wound up at the bottom of the AFC passing list, completing only four touchdown aerials.

Naturally, the Bills were aware of it, and the likelihood was that they would seek a more experienced quarterback during the off-season. Instead, they disposed of their No. 2 quarterback, veteran Dennis Shaw, sending him to St. Louis for wide receiver Ahmad Rashad, leaving themselves with Ferguson and inexperienced Leo Hart. It seems more of a backward step than anything, and that appears to be the way the Bills will travel this season, despite the great ground gaining of Simpson.

"I believe we showed improvement, and the players never did quit," said New England Coach Chuck Fairbanks in assessing the Patriots' 1973 season, in which they finished 5-9. "We were a young team, one that was building for the future. I wanted us to play as well as we were capable of playing . . . and I don't think we did that all the time. We made too many mistakes."

Those mistakes included 51 fumbles, the most in the league by any team. Experience probably will be the best cure for that. The Patriots' top four runners last season were rookies Sam Cunningham and Mack Her-ron, and second-year pros John Tarver and Josh Ashton. There were 17 other rookies and six second-year

pros on the Patriots' 47-man roster at the end of the season, making them one of the youngest teams in pro football. Their leader was a "greybeard," quarterback Jim Plunkett, playing his third season in the NFL. Plunkett again is the main man.

Youth also was served at Baltimore, where the Colts wound up trading a large group of veterans, including legendary quarterback Johnny Unitas, Tom Matte, Bubba Smith, Norm Bulaich, Bill Curry, Ray May, Billy Newsome, Jerry Logan, Dan Sullivan, Don Nottingham and Fred Miller. The results were disastrous for most of the season, until the Colts upset Miami and beat New England in their final two games.

Coach Howard Schnellenberger took part of the blame, saying he made a mistake early in the season, starting rookie Bert Jones at quarterback instead of Marty Domres. With Domres now established as the No. 1 quarterback, Lydell Mitchell a proven running back, a receiving corps that includes Tom Mitchell, Raymond Chester, Glenn Doughty and Cotton Speyrer, and a defense anchored by Mike Curtis and Ted Hendricks, the Colts could be ready to regain respectability.

CENTRAL DIVISION

The fact that the Pittsburgh Steelers were able to finish in a first-place tie with Cincinnati in the Central Division last season despite a series of crippling injuries to key players such as quarterbacks Terry Bradshaw and Terry Hanratty, running back John Fuqua and wide receiver Frank Lewis attested to the Steelers' strength.

They got maximum production from such reserves as quarterback Joe Gilliam, running backs Preston Pearson and Steve Davis and wide receiver Barry Pearson. And they got full-season standout performances from running back Franco Harris, defensive linemen Joe Greene and L. C. Greenwood, linebackers Andy Russell and Jack Ham, wide receiver Ron Shanklin, guard Bruce Van Dyke and safety Mike Wagner. In addition,

they will have All-American wide receiver Lynn Swann this season. He was their top draft choice.

He should help give the Steelers their third straight winning season for the first time in the club's history.

Although Cincinnati's Paul Brown wasn't named NFL Coach of the Year last season, he certainly deserved high acclaim for helping the Bengals gain a share of the Central Division title with Pittsburgh.

Brown's development of two outstanding rookies, wide receiver Isaac Curtis and running back Charles "Boobie" Clark, plus his acquisition of middle linebacker Bill Bergey, were among the big factors in the Bengals' rapid rise. Clark teamed with lightning-quick Essex Johnson in forming one of the league's best running tandems, and Curtis hooked up with rapidly improving Ken Anderson for a quick-striking passing combination.

Having made Anderson a top-notch quarterback, Brown will try and do the same this season with Wayne Clark, acquired from San Diego for injury plagued Virgil Carter.

"There are 13 other owners in the NFL who would have liked to have had the record we had last season (7-5-2)," Cleveland owner Art Modell said, "but by the Browns' standards it was not a good year. "We have the nucleus of a fine football team and we will come back in 1974."

By the Browns failing to make the playoffs for only the third time in 10 years, Modell said, "There is a horrible void and empty feeling in the front office. I'm very uncomfortable and it won't happen this year."

For the Browns to fulfill Modell's expectation, they will have to get more consistency from quarterback Mike Phipps, from their running backs and from their defense.

Two straight 1-13 seasons have not dimmed the optimism of Houston Coach Sid Gillman. The fiery Gillman, also the team's general manager, who fired Coach Bill Peterson after five games last season, believes the

Oilers "were really putting things together" at the end of 1973 and "I am really looking ahead to 1974."

Gillman had said at the end of last season that he wouldn't coach again this year, but changed his mind when several players petitioned him to remain on the job. Gillman has some good material in running back Fred Willis, quarterbacks Dan Pastorini and Lynn Dickey, wide receiver Ken Burrough, defensive linemen Tody Smith and John Matuszak and cornerback Zeke Moore, but not nearly enough to be a contender.

WESTERN DIVISION

A neatly balanced offense, a grudging defense and the emergence of Ken Stabler as a starting quarterback were the major points in the Oakland Raiders winning the Western Division title for the second straight year in 1973. That blend should keep the Raiders on top again this season.

Last year, they led the AFC in both total offense and total defense, while Stabler, taking over for Daryle Lamonica, won the passing title. In one game, the accurate left-hander set an all-time league record by completing 25 of 29 passes for better than 86 per cent efficiency.

Only a four-point loss to Oakland in the final game prevented Denver from making the playoffs for the first time in its 14-year history, but it didn't stop the Broncos from posting their first winning season (7-5-2). "Those four points put the Raiders into the playoffs instead of us," said Broncos' Coach John Ralston, "and you can believe we'll be going after them this year."

Three losses in the first four games didn't help either, but the Broncos rallied and ran off a seven-game unbeaten streak, and at one stage, for the first time ever, they held first place by themselves.

Ralston is such an optimist that he never says, "If we win," but "when we win."

"He is such an emphatically positive coach, it's rubbed off on us," says quarterback Charley Johnson.

Ralston has molded a balanced attack, with Johnson, running back Floyd Little and wide receivers Gene Washington and Haven Moses. He also has established a stubborn defense. Furthermore, the Broncos signed their top two draft choices—All-American linebacker Randy Gradishar from Ohio State and defensive tackle Carl Wafer from Tennessee State.

"I'm damn tired of watching the playoffs on TV," fumed Kansas City Head Coach Hank Stram after his Chiefs had finished the 1973 season with a 7-5-2 record, short of a playoff berth. "Our goal is to work for a championship in 1974."

Stram also indicated he would call all the plays from the sidelines this season, something he tried successfully in the final game of 1973, a 33-6 victory over San Diego. "We hope this will take some pressure off the players," he explained. "It will give us more control of the game and tend to eliminate some mistakes. It doesn't really make any difference who calls the plays. The important thing is executing well."

Mike Livingston did most of the executing late last season, because veteran quarterback Len Dawson was sidelined with ankle and shoulder injuries. It is likely Livingston will be No. 1 at the outset this season.

Tommy Prothro, a failure with a talented Los Angeles team that he couldn't motivate or discipline, is getting a second chance at an NFL coaching job, this time with the disorganized San Diego Chargers. He will try and establish calm following a chaotic 2-11-1 season in which Harland Svare and Ron Waller tried coaching the Chargers.

"I think if Tommy is given a fair shot in this job, he will be the last coach we hire for a long time," promised San Diego owner Eugene Klein.

Prothro has vowed to change his discipline pattern by installing a curfew, but he won't change his big-play offense. "I have never believed in ball control," he said.

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

When Carroll

Rosenbloom,

owner of the Los Angeles Rams, fired Head Coach Tommy Prothro last year and hired Chuck Knox, he indicated what probably brought about the dismissal of Prothro.

"What I know of the Los Angeles Rams," said Rosenbloom, "we should go to the Super Bowl. I think we should have gone to the Super Bowl last season (1972)."

The Rams didn't go to the Super Bowl in 1972. In fact, they didn't even have a winning record, finishing 6-7-1, the first time a Rosenbloom team had dropped under .500 in 16 years. And they didn't go last season, either. But they did have a winning record in 1973, their 12-2 mark tying Super Bowl champion Miami and Minnesota for the best showing during the regular National Football League season. It also was the Rams' best record in history and enabled them to easily win the National Football Conference's West Division championship.

They might have gone to the Super Bowl had they not committed a pair of costly errors in the first minute of their playoff game against Dallas. The Cowboys converted both miscues into touchdowns and went on to a 27-16 victory.

It was the most lopsided loss the Rams had suffered all season, and naturally, the most disheartening, ending their Super Bowl dreams. Their other two setbacks were by a total of three points—10-9 to Minnesota and 15-13 to Atlanta. Both were suffered consecutively in the middle of the season. Prior to those, the Rams won

six games, and after them, they won six more, before being eliminated in the playoffs by Dallas.

Despite the disappointing downfall against the Cowboys, Los Angeles had an outstanding season. "He (Knox) came in cold and got it all together so fast it was phenomenal," said quarterback John Hadl, whom the coach rescued from San Diego.

The Rams led the NFL in scoring with 388 points, in offense with an average of 350.4 yards per game and in defense with a yield of only 210.8 yards per game.

Now, having absorbed Knox' conservative style of play for one full season and having added Heisman Trophy winner John Cappelletti of Penn State in the draft, the Rams should be even stronger this season, and again be the best in the West.

Atlanta's improving Falcons and San Francisco's rebounding 49ers could offer some resistance, but not enough.

In the NFC Central Division, Minnesota's Super Bowl losers again figure to dominate, with Green Bay and Detroit offering minimal challenges for the second straight year, while in the East, Dallas, despite a slight deterioration, should outlast Washington's ageless wonders for the title.

Bill Arsnsparger, replacing Alex Webster with the New York Giants, is the NFC's only full-fledged new head coach, although John North at New Orleans will be starting his first full season with the Saints after succeeding J. D. Roberts early in the 1973 campaign.

Here is the predicted order of finish for each division:

East Division
Dallas
Washington
Philadelphia
New York
St. Louis

Central Division
Minnesota
Detroit
Green Bay
Chicago

West Division
Los Angeles
Atlanta
San Francisco
New Orleans

EASTERN DIVISION

Although chinks appeared in the Cowboys' armor last season, some apparently stemming from contract hassles with management prior to the opening of training camp, Dallas' success in 1973 could not be challenged.

They tied Washington for the East title with a 10-4 record and reached the playoffs for an unprecedented eighth straight year. Then they beat Los Angeles in the opening round of the playoffs before losing to Minnesota for the NFC title. That loss, however, was mainly attributable to the absence of two of their stars—running back Calvin Hill and defensive tackle Bob Lilly—both of them injured.

Both are expected back in good health this season, but Lilly, along with several others, are advancing in age, and that could possibly spell some trouble. That group includes Mel Renfro, Dave Edwards, Cornell Green and Lee Roy Jordan. Two others—Dave Manders and Chuck Howley—were called out of retirement last season when the club was experiencing some difficulties, but neither is expected to play this year.

Coach Tom Landry, realizing the club's age problem, tried using several youngsters, including Billy Joe DuPree, Drew Pearson, Golden Richards, Robert Newhouse, Les Strayhorn, Harvey Martin and the Barnes boys—Rodrigo and Benny. This year, he had the luxury of the No. 1 choice in the draft, and took Ed "Too Tall" Jones, the 6-foot-9 defensive end from Tennessee State.

But the key Cowboys remain Hill, the piston-legged running back who set club rushing records by carrying the ball 273 times for 1,142 yards in 1973, and Roger Staubach, finally established as the team's No. 1 quarterback, who won the NFL passing championship, completing better than 62% of his aerials for 2,428 yards and 23 touchdowns.

Like Dallas, Washington is an aging club. But unlike

the Cowboys, the Redskins don't try to stock their roster with youthful replacements. Instead, Coach George Allen prefers to bring in more and more tested veterans, emphasizing his motto, "The Future Is Now."

Allen's theory certainly can't be demeaned, because it has propelled the Redskins into the playoffs in each of the last three seasons—the first time that has happened in the club's 37-year history. Allen continued the hire-a-vet policy during the off-season, acquiring guard Walt Sweeney from San Diego, wide receiver Joe Sweet from Los Angeles and guard Cornelius Johnson from Baltimore while obtaining the rights to quarterback Joe Theismann from Miami.

Theismann, a standout in the Canadian Football League since graduating as an All-American from Notre Dame, could provide healthy leadership at quarterback, where 34-year-old Billy Kilmer and 40-year-old Sonny Jurgensen consistently suffered from injuries last season.

Larry Brown, the NFC's leading rusher in 1972 with 1,216 yards, also was plagued with injuries, and although he led the conference with 14 touchdowns, his production slipped to 860 yards. Surprisingly, despite Brown's ailments, Duane Thomas, the talented but enigmatic running back, saw little action.

Philadelphia didn't produce the winning season that Mike McCormack had hoped for in his first year as head coach in 1973, but the Eagles regained respectability. Although they had only a 5-8-1 record, their offense, spearheaded by veteran quarterback Roman Gabriel, was one of the most explosive in the league. It was their porous defense that cost them more victories.

With Gabriel leading the NFL in nearly every passing category, Philadelphia's offense accounted for 32 touchdowns—20 more than in 1972. Six-foot-eight Harold Carmichael won the NFC receiving title with 67 catches, rookie Charlie Young grabbed 55 passes and running backs Tom Sullivan and Norm Bulaich

had productive seasons. Overall, the Eagles established themselves as a team on the rise.

New York, meanwhile, experienced a dismal decline, falling from 8-6 in 1972 to 2-11-1 in '73, the second worst record in its history. The season, which had been so promising after six straight exhibition victories, fell apart after a 1-0-1 start when the Giants lost seven in a row. By the end of the season, which ended with four straight setbacks, morale was low and dissension was rampant.

To try and alleviate the situation this year, Head Coach Alex Webster resigned "for the good of the team" and was replaced by Bill Arnsparger, who had been Miami's defensive coordinator. And former Giants' star Andy Robustelli was hired as Director of Operations with responsibilities for trades, player negotiations and scouting.

The signing of All-American offensive lineman John Hicks of Ohio State also should help.

Arnsparger's main job, however, will be restoring the players' pride. If he can do that, the Giants should be improved.

If nothing else, St. Louis has shown consistency over the past three years, finishing each season with a 4-9-1 record. When Don Coryell took over as coach in 1973, he promised to rev up the Cardinals' sputtering attack . . . and he did. The Cardinals scored almost 100 more points and gained nearly 800 yards more than in 1972, but their defense was woefully weak, surrendering the most points in the NFC. So defense will be the area in which the Cardinals will be trying to better themselves this season.

CENTRAL DIVISION

Bud Grant, the quiet coach of Minnesota's defending NFC champions, doesn't believe the Vikings will get complacent this season. "We never have a letdown," he says. "It doesn't matter which team we have just played or which team we are about to play. We're a contender."

We always get the best shot from people. There are no peaks and valleys on this team. It's a steady team, and we know that every week the other guys will be trying with a special effort to knock us off."

The Vikings, meanwhile, will be attempting to shake the stigma of losing big games. Five times in the past six seasons they reached the playoffs, but twice they were beaten in the Super Bowl, including last season's 24-7 loss to Miami, and the other three times they were eliminated in opening round playoff games.

Quarterback Fran Tarkenton, who did much to erase his losing image by leading the Vikings to the Central Division title and the NFC championship, again will direct the Vikings' attack and rely on running back Chuck Foreman and wide receiver John Gilliam.

Detroit, which usually gives a good account of itself even when losing, didn't even do that last season, according to owner William Clay Ford. "They had no pride," he charged. "There was a lack of desire, a lack of execution and a lack of everything. They just stood around and qualified for the pension plan."

Veteran linebacker Mike Lucci, who retired after the season, put the blame on Coach Don McCafferty, saying McCafferty didn't control the players.

If McCafferty can control and motivate the Lions this year, he will find some excellent talent, including quarterback Greg Landry, injured much of 1973, running backs Altie Taylor, Steve Owens and Mel Farr, and tight end Charlie Sanders.

Green Bay's slide from Central Division champions in 1972 to an also-ran last year was caused mainly by the inability to find a forceful quarterback and crippling injuries, particularly to defensive back Willie Buchanon and offensive lineman Bill Hayhoe, both of whom suffered broken legs.

The failure at quarterback, where Scott Hunter, Jerry Tagge and Jim Del Gaizo all were found lacking, enabled opponents to concentrate on stopping the Packers' running game. Even though John Brockington led the conference in rushing with 1,144 yards, the Pack-

ers' ground game was not as effective as in 1972. The quarterbacks passed for a total of only seven touch-downs, the fewest in the NFC.

Similar to Green Bay, Chicago had a problem at quarterback, but the Bears have been experiencing problems for years at that position, since they named Bobby Douglass as the starter. Douglass has proven an excellent runner, but his passing has been sub-par.

There was a cry by Chicago fans to use rookie Gary Huff last season, but Coach Abe Gibron stuck with Douglass until he got hurt. Then Huff got his chance, and was just as bad. The dilemma will be one of Gibron's many headaches this year.

Another concerns the great Dick Butkus, who has been hobbled by injuries in recent years. The likelihood is that Butkus will be switched from linebacker to center, with No. 1 draft choice Waymond Bryant from Tennessee State inheriting his job.

WESTERN DIVISION

"Pride and conditioning" and "discipline and motivation" are the phrases Los Angeles Coach Chuck Knox uses in explaining the Rams' turnaround last season from third-place finishers in 1972 to division champions in 1973.

He also toned down quarterback John Hadl's habit of throwing long passes too often and had him firing more short-range attempts. It resulted in Hadl having his best season in the NFL in 12 years. Knox also gave youngsters Jim Bertelsen and Larry McCutcheon the opportunity to become starters for the first time in the pros, and they responded by totaling nearly 2,000 yards rushing. And he blended his veterans and rookies into a cohesive unit, a group that should go all the way in the NFC this season.

This season probably will be no different than the last few for the Atlanta Falcons. They will nurture hopes of a title, and fall short.

Their optimism was at fever pitch last season when

they rallied from a 1-3 start with seven straight victories, including a dramatic 20-14 decision over previously unbeaten Minnesota in a nationally televised game. But two losses in their last three games ended their chances.

Bob Lee, finally getting a starting job at quarterback, proved his mettle, and Dave Hampton solidified his position as one of the league's best runners, but the offense still sputtered because of the lack of a strong No. 2 runner and enough capable receivers.

The San Francisco 49ers will not have their familiar look this season . . . quarterback John Brodie having retired after 17 pro seasons. That will leave the quarterback chores to Steve Spurrier and Joe Reed, neither of whom distinguished himself last year when the 49ers plummeted to a tie for third place after three straight division titles.

Other unfamiliar starters could be the 49ers' top two draft picks, running back Wilbur Jackson from Alabama and defensive tackle Bill Sandifer from UCLA. "The problems last year were penalties, injuries and players not performing like they had been," said Coach Dick Nolan. "I don't think we have players who are over the hill."

Coach John North, after replacing J. D. Roberts early last season, convinced the New Orleans Saints they could be winners—and they went out and proved it. "They don't doubt themselves any more," he said.

New Orleans' five victories in 1973 equalled their best output in history. And with quarterback Archie Manning and running back Jess Phillips leading the offense, North said he is confident they will do better this year.

WORLD FOOTBALL LEAGUE First, Gary Davidson was in basketball as a founder and first president of the American Basketball Association. Then it was hockey as co-founder and first president of the World Hockey Association. It was only logical that football would be next for this innovative California attorney. Hence, the World Football League.

Davidson is a smooth-talking, fast-dealing operator who has created a successful track record for expansion in two sports and believes he can do it in football as well. He shies away from suggestions that his league might engage the established National Football League in a money war similar to the one that spiced the 1960s when the American Football League arrived on the scene. "Let's just say we are offering new employment opportunities to players who might want a change in climate or a chance to make more money," he said.

Several NFL stars, headed by Miami's Larry Csonka, Jim Kiick and Paul Warfield, accepted the offer and jumped to the new league.

Csonka, Kiick and Warfield shocked the Super Bowl champion Dolphins by signing a deal with the WFL's Toronto franchise. Shortly after that, Oakland lost both its quarterbacks when Ken Stabler signed with Birmingham and Daryle Lamonica with Southern California. Calvin Hill, Dallas' star rusher, and tight end Ted Kwalick of San Francisco, jumped to Honolulu.

Almost all of the jumpers are for future delivery and must play out their NFL option clauses before switching leagues. Stabler, for example, is under contract to the Raiders for 1974 and won't be able to play out his

option until 1975, meaning he can't join Birmingham until 1976.

Some of the WFL signees, such as tackle John Elliot and quarterback Virgil Carter, played out their options last season and will show up in the new league immediately—Elliot with the New York Stars and Carter with the Chicago Fire.

The WFL plans a 12-team league to begin operations during the summer of 1974 with games on Wednesday night and a game of the week on Thursday. That is an obvious effort to steer clear of a confrontation with the NFL, deeply entrenched in the nation's weekend TV viewing habits.

Just as he did in basketball with the three-point field goal and in hockey with overtime, Davidson plans some rule changes for the WFL. Kickoffs will be from the 30-yard line instead of the 40 and goal posts will be moved to the back of the end zones, making field goals a bit more difficult. Missed field goals will return the ball to the line of scrimmage and teams will have the option of trying for two-point conversions instead of the conventional extra point kick. There will be a fifth quarter of overtime to attempt to break ties.

The WFL's 12 franchises were set for New York, Southern California, Chicago, Detroit, Honolulu (how's that for a change in climate?) Toronto, Portland, Florida, Birmingham, Philadelphia, Washington-Baltimore and Houston.

A week before the National Football League draft, the 12 teams zipped through six rounds of their own draft in less than two hours. The top choice was Kansas quarterback David Jaynes, chosen by the Memphis franchise which later moved to Houston. Tennessee State defensive end Ed Jones, top choice in the NFL draft a week later, was the 36th player picked in the WFL with Detroit taking him as the final selection of the third round.

It is one thing to draft players, but quite another to sign them. On the day before the NFL draft, the WFL shocked the old league when the Southern California

franchise announced it had signed its first three draftees, running backs James McAlister of UCLA and Kermit Johnson of USC and guard Booker Brown of USC.

Veteran NFL players welcomed the development of the new league, anticipating a possible bidding battle for their services. "Now there's an alternative," crowed Bobby Bryant, cornerback of the NFC champion Minnesota Vikings.

Sports attorney Robert Woolf agreed that the development of the new league would give the players a bargaining wedge. "Everybody in the sport is going to improve financially," said Woolf. "You won't see salaries going from \$20,000 to \$80,000 though. I'd say \$20,000 to \$35,000 is more like it."

The WFL recruited a couple of familiar NFL names in its early stages to help with its identification. New York's field boss will be longtime NFL performer Babe Parilli and Washington-Baltimore hired Jack Pardee as its head man.

Another method of identification will be the football. Davidson introduced the red, white and blue basketball to the ABA and has similar plans for the WFL. Asked what specific colors he had in mind, Davidson shrugged.

"I'll tell you one thing, though," he said. "It won't be drab brown."

THE DRAFT The Heisman Trophy, awarded to the top football player in America, usually goes to one of the glamor boys who achieves collegiate stardom as a quarterback or running back. But if you want to know the priorities of professional football, you have only to note that, during the last three years, the first

player picked in the National Football League's annual draft has been a defensive end.

Three years ago, Buffalo went for big Walt Patulski. In 1973, the man was John Matuszak, selected by the Houston Oilers. Houston earned the first pick again in the 1974 draft by compiling the poorest record in the league. But the Oilers had traded their rights to No. 1 to Dallas in a deal that brought them wide receiver Billy Parks and defensive lineman Tody Smith. That meant that the No. 1 choice belonged to the Cowboys, and they wasted no time making their selection: Ed "Too Tall" Jones, an awesome, 6-foot-9 giant from Tennessee State.

"There was never any question about him being Number One," said Gil Brandt, player personnel director of the Cowboys, who announced the choice. "We feel he can step right in."

The Cowboys' selection of Jones took less than half a minute from the time Brandt named him in Dallas, until the draft card was filled out and announced by Commissioner Pete Rozelle in New York. The remaining NFL teams didn't move nearly that fast and the impressive scoreboard clock, set at 15 minutes for each selection, repeatedly ran down to almost zero before clubs made their picks. The first round of the draft lasted a shade under four hours.

The pace quickened a bit after that opening round, but the 26 teams completed only four more rounds on the opening day of the draft. That left 12 of the 17 rounds for the draft's second day, and the teams selected at a tedious snail's pace. From the time Dallas selected Jones until the moment Miami chose defensive back Ken Dickerson of Tuskegee, the 442nd and final player selected, the draft consumed 22 hours, six minutes. It was the longest draft session since 1968.

Offensive players were the draft's priority, with 249 of them picked as compared to 193 defensive players. The top single position was running back, with 77 chosen. The favorite conference was the Big Eight, which had 51 of its players picked compared to the Big Ten,

second with 38 players chosen. UCLA was the top individual school with 12 draftees. Next came Penn State, Colorado and Michigan with 10 each and Southern California with nine.

There were some interesting picks, and non-picks too. Three potentially high NFL draftees, running backs James McAlister of UCLA, Kermit Johnson of USC and guard Booker Brown, also of USC, had signed with the rival World Football League on the eve of the draft. Still, NFL teams couldn't resist the temptation of grabbing them, although not as high as players of their quality would be expected to go. Oakland picked McAlister and Houston went for Brown in the sixth round; San Francisco picked Johnson in the seventh.

On the last round, Baltimore drafted wide receiver Tim Berra of Massachusetts, son of baseball Hall of Famer Yogi Berra. Available, but not drafted—even by his father—was George Allen, Jr., son of the coach of the Washington Redskins. Young Allen was a quarterback at the University of Virginia, and might have expected a courtesy pick by his father on the last round when all of the real prospects have been selected. But pop, who doesn't believe in the draft anyway, traded away his final round pick—the fourth time in the draft he swapped away selections for veteran players.

FIRST DRAFT CHOICES

American Conference

Baltimore—JOHN DUTTON, Nebraska, defensive end, 6-7, 255—Totaled 67 tackles and eight quarterback sacks in his senior year. Also starred in discus in college. Made eight All American teams. Nicknamed "Lurch" because of size.

Buffalo—REUBEN GANT, Oklahoma State, tight end, 6-4, 227—Has tremendous potential. A tough blocker, essential prerequisite for a tight end. Did not

really blossom as a pass catcher in college and is considered a pro sleeper.

Cincinnati—**BILL KOLLAR**, Montana State, defensive tackle, 6-3½, 251—MVP in the post-season Senior Bowl game. Always hustles. Quick and strong, two assets pros always seek. Best pro prospect from Montana State since Jan Stenerud.

Cleveland—**BILL CORBETT**, Johnson C. Smith, tackle, 6-5, 278—Has the size and speed to make it big. Senior year was a washout because of injury.

Denver—**RANDY GRADISHAR**, Ohio State, linebacker, 6-3, 236—Called “The finest linebacker I’ve ever coached,” by Woody Hayes. Always on the ball. Led Buckeyes with 53 solo tackles and 71 assists and added 10 more in Rose Bowl against Southern California.

Houston—**STEVE MANSTEDT**, Nebraska, linebacker, 6-2, 202—Came to Nebraska without a scholarship but earned one with tough, quick play. Had a hand in 70 tackles and returned an interception 65 yards last year.

Kansas City—**WOODY GREEN**, Arizona State, running back, 6-1, 202—Gained over 1,000 yards in each of his last two collegiate seasons. Has 4.5 speed for 40 yards in full uniform and has done the 100 in 9.5 as a track sprinter. First consensus All-American from state of Arizona.

Miami—**DON REESE**, Jackson State, defensive end, 6-6, 255—Great speed—4.6 for 40 yards. Can also work at tackle. College Coach Bob Hill calls him “the quickest lineman I’ve ever seen.”

New England—**STEVE CORBETT**, Boston College, guard, 6-4, 252—Drafted as a guard, although he played center as a senior at BC. Timed in 4.7 for 40 yards and is extremely fast off the ball.

New York Jets—**CARL BARZILAUSKAS**, Indiana, defensive tackle, 6-6, 266—Big, fast and strong. What else could you ask for in a rushing lineman? Double team blocking doesn’t bother him. Led team in tackles each of last two years.

Oakland—HENRY LAWRENCE, Florida A&M, tackle, 6-4, 253—An outstanding prospect with lightning speed. Tremendous blocker and considered a can't miss prospect by A&M athletic director Jake Gaither.

Pittsburgh—LYNN SWANN, Southern California, wide receiver, 6-0, 180—Caught 37 passes for 667 yards, best in the Pacific-8 Conference last year. Had 95 career catches, tops in USC history. Also gained 99 yards in 14 carries last year.

San Diego—BO MATTHEWS, Colorado, running back, 6-2, 228—The second player chosen in the draft. Tough runner and an outstanding blocker. Averaged 4.7 and 5.1 yards per carry in last two collegiate seasons.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Atlanta—GERALD TINKER, Kent State, wide receiver, 5-10, 182—Won Olympic gold medal as member of U.S. 400-meter relay team. Shares world record of 9.1 for 100 yards outdoors. Averaged 13.3 yards per punt return and ran two punts back for TDs.

Chicago—WAYMOND BRYANT, Tennessee State, linebacker, 6-3, 236—Impressive career statistics include 168 tackles, five quarterback sacks, eight fumble recoveries and seven interceptions.

Dallas—ED JONES, Tennessee State, defensive tackle, 6-9, 264—Nicknamed "Too Tall." The No. 1 choice of the 442 players drafted. Jets' Coach Charlie Winner calls him "a whole pass defense all by himself." Awesome size and speed.

Detroit—ED O'NEIL, Penn State, linebacker, 6-3, 230—Another outstanding linebacker produced by Joe Paterno, who specializes in them. Called defensive signals for Nittany Lions. Excellent speed. Had six career interceptions.

Green Bay—BARTY SMITH, Richmond, running back, 6-3, 235—Totaled 1,941 yards in three varsity seasons and was a top notch blocker too. Led Southern Conference with 13 touchdowns last year.

Los Angeles—JOHN CAPPELLETTI, Penn State, running back, 6-1, 215—Winner of the Heisman Trophy as nation's top college player. Had 2,639 career rushing yards, second best in Penn State history, despite spending first varsity season as a defensive back. Gained 1,522 yards last year.

Minnesota—STEVE RILEY, Southern California, tackle, 6-5, 248. Works both strong side and weak side tackle and was a collegiate ironman, starting every game for USC. Strong, big and fast, all pro priorities.

New Orleans—RICK MIDDLETON, Ohio State, linebacker, 6-3, 222. Picked ahead of more publicized linebacking teammate Randy Gradishar. Made several All-Big 10 teams and is considered a good prospect.

New York Giants—JOHN HICKS, Ohio State, offensive tackle, 6-3, 258—Won the Outland Trophy as top lineman in country. Second to John Cappelletti in Heisman balloting. Rated best lineman he ever coached by Woody Hayes, who has had some good ones.

Philadelphia—MITCH SUTTON, Kansas, defensive tackle, 6-4, 255—Took part in 51 tackles, half of them unassisted last year. Was National Junior College Lineman of the Year in 1970.

San Francisco—BILL SANDIFER, UCLA, defensive tackle, 6-6, 285—A giant who impressed scouts in East-West game. Combines size, agility and quickness. Top wrestler too.

St. Louis—J.V. CAIN, Colorado, tight end, 6-4, 226—Led team with 23 catches for 293 yards last year. Has 4.6 speed for 40 yards and great hands, a must for a pass catcher. Good blocker.

Washington—JON KEYWORTH, Colorado, tight end, 6-3, 228—Was the 144th player chosen, but first selected by the Redskins, who had traded off their choices in first five rounds of the draft.

PLAYER PROFILES

JOHN BROCKINGTON

To put it bluntly, the passing game was a disaster for the Green Bay Packers last season. There are 26 teams in the National Football League and 24 of them managed to gain more ground through the air than the 1,283 yards that Green Bay's quarterbacks accomplished.

Basic football strategy dictates that when you can't pass the football, you run with it. So instead of banging their heads against a stone wall, the Packers took the logical way out. They handed the ball to John Brockington.

Opposing defenses caught on pretty fast. You didn't have to be a coaching genius to figure out how the Packers were going to try to move the football. The name of the game was to key on Brockington, the Pack's chief offensive weapon. That left the defenses open to the pass, but Green Bay couldn't take advantage of that gap, and so it was a low risk strategy.

Week after week, therefore, Brockington faced a stacked defensive deck. And week after week, the big bruiser who learned his football in the concrete canyons of Brooklyn, N.Y., and refined it at Ohio State, destroyed those defenses. And when the season ended, Brockington was the National Football Conference's rushing champion with 1,144 yards, edging Dallas' Calvin Hill by a mere two yards for the crown.

Brockington won the title on the final Sunday of the otherwise bleak Green Bay season. He slashed his way to 142 yards in 22 carries against Chicago, overtaking Hill for the rushing championship.

A week earlier, Brockington had reached the 1,000-yard plateau in the late stages of Green Bay's game

against Minnesota. That accomplishment prompted a standing ovation from Packer fans, saluting a truly outstanding individual achievement. That's because, in the 54-year history of the National Football League, no runner had gained 1,000 yards in each of his first three seasons—until Brockington.

Tick off the names of pro football's greatest runners . . . Brown, Sayers, Simpson, Van Buren, Taylor, Matson. None of them reached that magic 1,000-yard mark in each of their first three years in the league. Brockington has done that, and it is an accomplishment of which he is exceedingly and justifiably proud.

"In front of me is an open door," he said thoughtfully after winning the conference rushing crown. "Jim Brown beat people because he was there every Sunday, killing them on every play. That's consistency and that's what I want."

Consistency is what Brockington has given the Packers since they drafted him in 1971. He has been the backfield bull, a workhorse who has developed into one of the league's most dependable runners.

"My running theory is simple," explained Brockington. "The first thing you have to do when you decide to be a running back is accept the fact that you are going to get hit. If you're running slow, you get hit. If you're running fast, you get hit too. So you might as well run fast and hard."

That's exactly what Brock does. "I'm a slasher," he said, "I go inside and I rely on my weight to break tackles."

He breaks his share and has been ever since his high school days in Brooklyn, when Jim Brown, another metropolitan New York product, was his hero. "I never even thought of professional football," he said. "It sort of crossed my mind, but you can't plan on anything like that." After he led his school to the New York City championship, college scouts beat a steady path to his door. Woody Hayes won out.

"I decided on Ohio State because they had a good running program and I'd have a chance to use my

skills," he said. "They had a tradition of great running backs."

When he got to State, Brock discovered that Hayes' "Three Yards and a Cloud of Dust" offense had an incumbent to handle the ground chores. For two years, Brockington sat and watched Jim Otis run, often sulking over his situation. Finally, Otis graduated to the NFL and professional mediocrity, opening the door for Brockington. In his last year at OSU, with the wraps finally lifted, Brockington churned out 1,041 yards, a single season Buckeye rushing record. That prompted Green Bay to grab him on the first round of the NFL draft the following January.

Brock asserted himself early in his first Packer camp. He was one of the hardest workers and won himself a starting job quickly. He has always followed the same hard-work policy.

"He's unwilling to quit," said Charlie Hall, a Packer defensive back and Brockington's training camp roommate. "At camp, he spends hours after practice watching films of Jim Taylor. He's never too tired to work some more. He has intense determination. Brock lives to improve. I think he's going to become the greatest running back ever to play the game."

That is an opinion shared by others, the past's Jim Brown and the present's O. J. Simpson notwithstanding.

"John Brockington can do it all," said Green Bay Coach Dan Devine. "He has all the qualities that go into a super back. He is the player around whom we are going to build a championship." (Of course, Devine was talking before Brockington announced that he would play with the WFL in 1975.)

Championships were a Green Bay way of life under the late Vince Lombardi. In those days, Jim Taylor was the pile-driving runner—the role Brockington fills with the current Packers. "When you play for this team," John said, "you have a lot to live up to. There is a lot of tradition behind this organization. It was known as the best and now we have a chance to bring back the image. It's something a lot of us think about."

Call that pride, and it is pride that drives Brockington as hard as anything else. After practice, he will stay on the field to run wind sprints like a fringe player trying to impress the coach instead of the running star he is. Once a teammate asked Brock why he knocks himself out.

"I can't afford to get tired," said Brockington. "If I carry the ball 20 times in a game, I can't afford to come back to the huddle breathing hard. That's why I run the sprints."

Brockington doesn't attempt to run over opponents, unless absolutely necessary. But he's certainly not going to back away from them. "You're less likely to get hurt if you run hard," he said. "They're going to hit you anyway, and they're not going to get any madder at you if you run harder, so you'd best get up in there."

Brockington has been doing just that for the last four years—his senior season at Ohio State and the next three years with the Packers. He's gone over 1,000 yards in each of those years and now is looking ahead to the 1974 season with a new goal. The only men in NFL history to pass 1,000 yards rushing four straight years were Jim Taylor and Jim Brown. Brockington would like to become the third member of that exclusive club, but he knows it won't be easy. The 1,000-yard plateau is a football rusher's Mount Everest.

"When you get around that 800 mark, the yards come harder," said Brockington. "I really don't know whether it's the nature of the offense or the people keying on you. It's hard to tell whether they're keying on you when you are in your stance. Once you get the ball, it's like soup with everything stirring around."

Even though he's Number One in Green Bay, John Brockington—who has fought his way yard by yard into the NFL record book in his first three seasons—still tries harder.

"Sure we had incentive," he said. "Coach Shula said we'd have next Wednesday off if we won."

Perhaps that explains, in part why Csonka is going to the WFL in 1975.

CARL ELLER Crash!

The blackboard went flying across the Minnesota Vikings' dressing room. It was Carl Eller's way of saying, "Fellows, listen to me—or else," and it caught his teammates' attention. "I'll say it did," said running back Oscar Reed.

The scene was halftime of Minnesota's playoff opener against Washington last December. The Redskins were leading 7-3 and taciturn Coach Bud Grant paced his office, huddled with the other Minnesota coaches, trying to figure out a second-half strategy that would turn things around. That was when Eller decided his teammates needed a pep talk. "There were a few things that had to be said, so I said them," explained the Vikings' veteran defensive end. Then, just to make sure everybody was listening, he teed off on a blackboard with the kind of explosiveness he usually reserved for an enemy running back.

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LARRY CSONKA It was just the second play of Super Bowl VIII when Miami Dolphins quarterback Bob Griese called Larry Csonka's number in the huddle. Quickly, the Dolphins broke for the line of scrimmage, and Csonka's muscles tensed as Griese set his team.

The quarterback barked signals, and as the ball was snapped, Csonka's ham-hock-shaped legs began churning. Griese turned and stuffed the football into his fullback's midsection. Csonka headed straight for the right side of his line where Miami's all-pro guard, Larry Little, makes his living. Csonka hit the line like a pile-driver and felt the thump of bodies bouncing off each other in football's pit. Almost immediately, Minnesota's Purple Gang collided with Csonka. Gary Larsen and Roy Winston met in the vicinity of Csonka's huge legs and down went Zonk.

The play had gained a mere two yards, and in their first confrontation, the Purple Gang had beaten Csonka. It didn't happen many more times that day.

Three plays later, Griese gave the ball to Csonka again. This time, the play went for 16 yards. Zonk carried three more times in that game-opening march. The drive went 10 plays for 62 yards, and on five of the plays, Csonka carried the football. He gained 36 yards. In $5\frac{1}{2}$ minutes, Csonka gained more ground than any of Minnesota's running backs accomplished in the entire game.

When it was over, Csonka had gained 145 yards on 33 carries, both Super Bowl records. It was an impressive performance against the Vikings, one of pro football's best defensive teams. Standing on the sidelines,

Minnesota quarterback Fran Tarkenton watched Csonka singlehandedly destroy the Vikings.

"I don't think I ever saw a fullback play any better than Csonka," said Tarkenton. "He has to be the strongest fullback I've ever seen."

Tarkenton had company in his admiration for the number Csonka had done on the Purple Gang. Hall of Famer Bronco Nagurski shook his head in wonderment at Zonk's performance. "I really didn't think anybody could run like that against the Vikings," said Nagurski.

Then Bronco paid Csonka the ultimate compliment. "I've been watching Csonka for the last few years," said Nagurski, once an awesomely destructive runner himself. "And I'd rate him above Jim Brown, Jim Taylor or any other fullback."

What about a fullback named Nagurski?

"I was all right," said Bronco. "But to be honest, I think Csonka is better than I ever was . . . I was a straight downfield runner. I wouldn't, or rather couldn't, dodge anybody. If somebody got in my way, I ran through them."

Csonka can do that, but he also has the ability to dodge tacklers with shifts you'd expect from a scatback. Like most runners, Csonka credits Little, Jim Langer, Norm Evans, Bob Kuechenberg and Wayne Moore—the Dolphins' offensive line—with much of his success. "The thing about our offense," said Zonk, "is that the linemen can adjust on the move. We know where they're going and they know where we're going. I'm very, very proud of our offensive line."

The feeling is mutual. "He is one hell of a runner," said Evans, nodding at large Larry.

Csonka is certainly constructed for his job. He is 6-foot-2 and 237 pounds, most of it muscle. He has enormous legs that eat up yards in huge chunks and drive like pistons.

Csonka is not a finesse runner. He is a very basic kind of guy. "I'm a third-and-two runner," he often says of himself and it's true. He is exactly the guy you'd want to carry the ball in that tough, short-yard-

age situation. But he sometimes contributes other things to the Dolphin offense. There was, for example, the moment during the last Super Bowl game when Griese called a play in the huddle and brought the team to the line. Suddenly, the quarterback looked around, confusion on his face. Csonka recognized the problem immediately.

"He forgot the count," laughed Larry. Griese asked the fullback and then, armed with the proper signal, called it and handed the football to Csonka. The fullback then barreled into the end zone for the score.

Csonka gained 1,003 yards last year—his third straight 1,000-yard season. Those yards don't come easy, even for a man his size. The bumps and bruises start even before they begin adding up those yards. For Csonka, they started in the College All Star Game won by the Dolphins, 14-3. He gained 76 yards in that game but paid for every one of them. Afterwards, he sat with ice bags held in place by elastic bandages taped to his right calf, right big toe and left elbow. A dressing room visitor made the mistake of asking if it had been a tough game.

"I'm not sitting here with all these ice bags on because I was at a teen-age hop," he snapped. "I feel like freezing all these bad spots for about 10 minutes. Damn, they hurt. They mauled the hell out of me, if you want the truth."

Csonka remembered how he got hurt. "I got a leg whip early in the first quarter," he said. "I was under a pile with the calf hanging out and somebody drove it into the turf. The muscle's not as hard now as it will be a month from now. In midseason you couldn't bruise the bone under my calf if you took a sledgehammer to it. Right now it's soft."

That's what training camp is all about—toughening up the body and mind for the long regular season and playoff grind ahead. "Worse than being beat physically," Csonka continued, "is to go out there and lose track of what you're supposed to be doing in certain situations. In the middle of the season, we're like a pre-

cision machine. But now we're rough. I know I was indecisive a few times."

Coach Don Shula has a carefully designed plan for working out those pre-season cobwebs. It includes a 12-minute endurance run on the first day of training camp and a strictly enforced curfew that often bugs Csonka.

"Curfews have carried over from the early days of football," back to the Canton Bulldogs," said Zonk. "But that was when football players were looked upon as meat-eaters, guys who stayed out all night drinking beer and busting up bars. Today, you have extreme professionalism in your athletes. Any fellow who has played one or two years has proven he's willing to do the things necessary to get the job done. He knows that unless he gets his rest, he's going to be gone. Natural ability just won't carry you. If a player is not willing to work hard, he's not going to make it. Anyone with any intelligence resents being locked up."

Off the field, Csonka is a well-spoken, sensitive man whose main concern in life is his wife, Pam, and two sons, Doug, 7, and Paul, 5. "My boys are going to be in a particularly bad position because of their last name," he said. "They've already felt the pressure of being related to someone who is in athletics."

For that reason, Csonka protects his privacy and family life with a passion. "I have a private life," he said. "You bet I do. I keep that sanctuary. I have a responsibility to my family not to let their privacy be invaded."

Csonka does all the invading. He invades enemy lines, busting through them bloody Sunday after bloody Sunday for two hours or so. The rest of the time, pro football's one-man wrecking crew tries to keep things normal and serene for his family.

After the Dolphins had won their second straight Super Bowl, Csonka pointed a well-directed needle at his coach. Asked about the incentive factor for a team that had won 32 of its last 34 games, Csonka took offense.

"Sure we had incentive," he said. "Coach Shula said we'd have next Wednesday off if we won."

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"In the past sometimes," said Grant, "he'd take a day off. In the past, maybe he was satisfied to be just a good football player and derive the benefits from it.

But now he wants to be the very best. He has pride going for him, and he wants to be the best defensive end in football."

There are people around the National Football League who will testify that Eller has achieved that goal. It wasn't always that way. The man his teammates call Moose—he's 6-foot-6 and weighs 250, so what else would you call him?—has been in the NFL a decade; and when he first arrived as a No. 1 draft choice out of the University of Minnesota in 1964, the Vikings' Purple Gang was mostly "green."

Norm Van Brocklin was Minnesota's coach in Eller's first three pro seasons. If asked about Carl, the Dutchman would say, "When Moose gets up and gets after people, he's as good as anybody." That is about as left-handed a compliment as you'll ever hear. It was an indictment of Eller's drive—the kind of implication that leaves deep scars on an athlete's pride. And Eller's pride runs deep.

It was in Eller's fourth NFL season that Carl believes he matured as a player, and the Vikings developed into one of the league's finest teams. It happened in early November against the Green Bay Packers, always one of Minnesota's toughest opponents in the Central Division.

The Packers had won two straight Super Bowl titles and were anxious for another shot at pro football's pot of gold. Their chief competition figured to come from the rapidly improving Vikings. Minnesota won the first meeting between the teams that season, and unless Green Bay took the rematch, the Vikings would have a clear road to the division title. The second game was expected to be settled in the pit, where Carl Eller lives or dies, professionally speaking.

"I think any knowledgeable football man will tell you it's your defense that makes you a winner or a loser," said Eller. The Vikes came up a 14-10 winner that day, mostly because of their defense. The Purple Gang was on the field for an enormous amount of time in the second half, protecting a flimsy four-point lead. "If I

recall right," said Eller, "our offense was able to make only two first downs the entire second half, and one of those came by penalty."

Eller executed three very big plays in that crucial second half. Once, he tore past All-Pro guard Forrest Gregg and tagged quarterback Bart Starr for a 10-yard loss that left Starr wobbly, and sent him out of the game shortly afterwards. "I was sorry to see that happen," said Eller, "because while we play and hit as hard as we can, we never want to see anyone get injured. All of the players in the NFL have one thing in common. We recognize each other as comrades. But at the same time, you can never really pull off a quarterback, or a tackle, or a block, because that's not the true spirit of the game."

Later, Eller blocked a field goal and then stalled a final Green Bay drive when the Pack tried to run its famous sweep his way. He remembers the tackle he made on running back Donny Anderson that ended Green Bay's hopes. "I got off the ball as fast as I ever have in my life," he said, "and I hit Anderson before he had a chance to do anything. He fumbled, and Paul Krause recovered for us on our own 18 with just over two minutes left in the game. That just about wrapped it up for us. And as far as I'm concerned, that was the making of the Minnesota Vikings."

Minnesota went on to win the division title and has been a powerhouse ever since. And Eller has been a leader of that powerhouse. "I never get tired of the games, never," he said. "There's something in the game that makes me want to play. Situations arise where there's more of a necessity for the big play. When you go through a game, 40 to 60 plays, you have to anticipate and you have to go hard, because you never know when the opportunity for a big play will arise."

Few linemen turn in that big play as consistently as Eller, whose slashing style can wear down the toughest offensive tackle or guard.

"Sometimes I get nervous before a game," he said. "It depends on how well I feel physically, because I

know if I'm physically and mentally prepared for a game, then I know I can handle whichever way they come at me."

When movie cameras come at him, however, that's different. Eller, like many other athletes, has tried his hand at a few films and the experience shakes him up.

"I don't know how those people remain so calm when that camera's turning," he said, nodding at the other actors. "To me, I get just as emotionally ready for a scene in front of the camera as I get before each play. You have to prepare and get yourself up for that moment of truth in both professions. I feel the same intensity here as I do in football, and I find the same release after a scene as after a play."

Eller works on both sides of the camera. He has done three motion pictures, *Jarrett* with Glenn Ford, *Busting* with Elliot Gould, and *The Outfit* with Robert Duvall and Karen Black. He also has his own film producing company, specializing in football instructional films.

He takes his film work seriously and while making *The Outfit*, in which he plays a vengeance-seeking butcher, he told producer Carter DeHaven that he has movie plans for the future. "When I finally hang 'em up for good," said Eller, "I'd like to make acting my fulltime profession."

Eller displayed long patience for the countless retakes he encountered in the films he has made. "Thank heaven he's good natured," said DeHaven. "I'd hate to have him upset at anyone—especially with that meat cleaver in his hand."

That's nothing. Someday the movie man ought to see Carl assault a blackboard with his bare hands.

CHUCK FOREMAN No football dummy, Bud Grant knows that, for a National Football League team to win ball games, it has to be able to move on the ground. "Winning teams lead the league in rushing yardage," the Viking coach has said more than once. "Invariably, the teams with the most passing yardage and the most completions are losing teams."

Like a self-fulfilling prophecy, Grant needed to look no farther than the 1972 Minnesota Vikings to back up his belief. There was Fran Tarkenton, near the top of the NFL in every passing category and setting club records for attempts and completions. The numbers were dazzling, except in the standings, where the Vikings were a sorry 7-7. They key was found in Minnesota's offensive statistics for the season—2,726 passing yards and 1,740 rushing yards. You knew from those numbers what Grant would be looking for in the 1973 draft.

The top running back prospects in the draft were Purdue's Otis Armstrong and Sam "Bam" Cunningham of Southern California. But another name kept popping up in the post-season college All Star games: Chuck Foreman. After three years of doing a little bit of everything at Miami, Foreman was being given a chance to run with the football and doing quite a job of it in the post-season games. At the Senior Bowl, Foreman, who had spent his senior season as a wide receiver, showed up as a running back and churned out 167 yards. "They just kept giving me the ball," he said. In the stands, making notes, was Bud Grant. When the coach got back to Minnesota, Grant had Foreman near

the top of his list along with Armstrong and Cunningham.

"I went to the Senior Bowl practices to take a look at Chuck," said Grant. "I knew he was 6-foot-3 and 215, but I wanted to see how he was put together."

Satisfied that Foreman's construction met his needs, Grant sat back and waited for what would happen in the draft. There's no telling which running back he would have chosen if the Vikings were picking up top with the NFL's have-nots. But Minnesota was in the middle, drafting 12th. By the time the rotation reached the Vikes, Denver had grabbed Armstrong and New England had selected Cunningham. That left Foreman for Minnesota.

Forgive Foreman if he didn't know exactly what to expect when he got to Viking-land. He had played just about every position in high school and college. He was a good enough high school tight end to catch 50 touch-down passes. Those credentials earned him freshman work at the University of Miami as a defensive tackle and offensive halfback. As a sophomore he played cornerback, although he remembers thinking at the time, "I'd be better if I had the football." The next year he got the ball, and set a school record, rushing for 951 yards that season. His reward was a senior-year shift to wide receiver.

Did he have second thoughts about all of his position changes? "I don't question," he said. "I just do."

When he got to Minnesota, Bud Grant put Foreman's mind at ease. Chuck's job with the Vikings would be to run the ball. Foreman came to the job convinced that his varied experience at other positions would work in his favor. "I think it helped," he said. "I learned to read defenses as a receiver, and because I was a cornerback, I learned a little bit about what the defense thinks."

Foreman had an impressive training camp, and in the second game of the season, against the Chicago Bears, he was in the starting backfield for Minnesota. He responded with 116 rushing yards, a display that

inspired awe on the part of some of his teammates. "Unbelievable, phenomenal," said Tarkenton. "Phenomenal talent. Great attitude. People here in Chicago have not seen a back move like that on this field since Gale Sayers."

That's fast company to thrust a rookie into, but Foreman was a special kind of rookie. "Every rookie is under some pressure, you know, wondering whether you'll make it or not, worrying how the veterans will accept you, or whether you'll be accepted at all," he said. "But the attitude I took was not to think of myself as a rookie, to think of myself as a first-year man. If you think of yourself as a rookie, you'll always be a step behind."

That was never a problem for Foreman. "He's a quick starter," noted Coach Grant. "And once Foreman breaks into the secondary, it's a case of 185-pound backs trying to tackle a 215-pound locomotive. He gives us what John Brockington gives Green Bay and Franco Harris gives Pittsburgh."

Tarkenton agreed. "Foreman isn't a normal five-yard back," the quarterback said. "He'll break for 15 or 20 or more." As the season continued, so did Foreman's success. He gained 801 yards rushing, ninth best in the National Conference, and also caught 37 passes for an additional 362 yards. He was a shoo-in for Rookie of the Year honors and was nominated to play in the Pro Bowl. He took all of it in stride.

"I never doubted my abilities," he said. "I had shown I had ability. If I wasn't any good at all, I wouldn't have been drafted. So the only thing I had to do was satisfy myself. I knew what I could do and what I couldn't do. I felt the only thing the other people had over me was experience. So I didn't let myself have any pressure. I didn't think that way. I blocked it out of my mind."

Foreman has a knack for exploding through the line of scrimmage, and requires only a small opening to burst into the clear. "You only have to hold your block

about half as long for Foreman," said veteran tackle Grady Alderman.

Once through the line, Foreman's legs churn like pistons, grinding out the yards. As he breaks in the open, he can hear the roar of the crowd ringing in his ears. It turns him on.

"You know what I like best about this game?" he said. "It's to do the plays and watch the fans go crazy. We're entertainers. I don't want them to sit there with their heads in their hands, saying, 'Ho-hum, here we go again.' I want them back the next week."

"And after a spectacular run, I feel really good inside. I don't bust [spike] the ball. Man, I want to bust it. That's what I feel inside. But I'm cool about it. I just flip the ball to the man. But inside, man, inside it's like 1,000 little kids jumping up and down on Christmas morning."

Foreman describes his talent with rare insight for the artistic side of football. "When you're out there, it's just like being in a dream world, especially on a good run. You just put those moves on and go. Have you ever been chased by a dog? Well, that's how I feel when I carry the ball. I gotta get away, I gotta get away. The moves . . . the cuts . . . the tricks. It's not fear. But for me, it gets my adrenalin going, not letting those big guys get me, not letting them get a good shot at me. It's like being tied up and having to get free. It's a matter of life and death."

It is that drive and desire that has made Foreman a success. He could have gone the other way. Raised in a ghetto in Frederick, Md., he admits that he was exposed to the negative influences you might expect in that environment. "I didn't want to go that way," he said. "I realized the only way out was through football so I worked hard. My friends? Yeah, some of them are in jail, or dead, or hooked on heroin."

His victory over that adversity impresses his teammates. "People who are quick to knock the now generation, who say these kids want it all dumped into their

lap, should just take a long look at Chuck Foreman," said Tarkenton. "He works hard to be good."

And how good is he? Coach Grant was asked to compare Foreman with the NFL's top rushers. The coach just smiled.

"We don't compare Foreman with anyone," he said. "We hope that, very soon, people will be comparing other people with him."

ROMAN GABRIEL On the first day of training camp two summers ago, Roman Gabriel, like any other football player, began working the kinks out gradually. Then he felt the pain in his chest.

"The first thing I noticed," recalled Gabriel, "was a sort of spasm or cramp. I'd had a lot of muscle spasms and I figured it would go away. I kept working out 10 or 15 minutes. Then I got this shortness of breath."

Still, Gabriel continued to throw. But with each pass he threw, the pain became more intense. Eventually, he sank to his knees and had to be helped to the sidelines.

The quarterback's distress sounded like the classic case of acid indigestion, but it was more serious than that. It was in the dressing room that doctors diagnosed the problem. Roman Gabriel's right lung had collapsed.

That sounds a lot worse than it really is. The problem required hospitalization but the treatment was relatively simple. "The hardest part was lying on my back in the hospital four days," said Gabriel. "I couldn't move because they had this tube in my chest. It was connected to a machine."

The tube was used to draw out the air leaking from the collapsed lung into the chest cavity. It was that air

which caused Gabriel's pain. The lung eventually reinflated itself.

Within a few weeks, Gabriel was back at work, his lung repaired. But his days with the Rams were numbered, and you could go back to that opening day in camp when he first felt those pains to mark the beginning of the end of the 11-year marriage between the Rams and their quarterback.

First of all, his collapsed lung was the second major medical problem in two years for Gabriel, who had missed some time because of a cracked rib the year before. Second, he was slow rounding into condition and, third, he was 32 years old, a nervous age for athletes. When the Rams got off to a balky start that season, fingers began to point at the quarterback and the quarterback pointed right back.

"When a team loses, the quarterback often gets the blame," he said. "I know he takes a lot of it. But no man wins or loses all by himself."

The implication was clear. Look around the rest of the dressing room, Gabriel was saying. The guy calling the signals wasn't the only one to blame. A few weeks later, Oakland blitzed Los Angeles 45-17, and in the dressing room afterwards, Gabriel put the public blast on a number of his teammates, terming them "selfish."

"He alienated some of the friendships he made on the team," said veteran guard Joe Scibelli. "I don't think it was right for Roman to single out other guys and exempt himself."

Gradually, the schism between Gabriel and the Rams grew as the 1972 season dragged to a climax. Shortly after it ended, LA traded for John Hadl, San Diego's veteran quarterback. That was the last straw so far as Gabriel was concerned.

"The problems could have been solved at one time," said Merlin Olsen, Gabriel's longtime teammate. "But unfortunately they weren't. This was one case where the longer it went, the worse it got. Also, Gabe felt that when they brought in Hadl, it was their way of saying,

'We don't have confidence in you and we've found someone to take your place.' "

The Rams denied that charge, but it was what Gabriel believed and so he demanded to be traded. Now that's easily said, but not so easily done. Gabe comes—or goes—with a rather hefty contract, and the Rams wanted something in exchange for their quarterback, too. When it appeared that no deal might be arranged, Gabriel dropped a bombshell. "Trade me," he told the Rams, "or I'll leave the team and play minor league football."

The wedge was the Las Vegas Casinos, a team in something called the Southern Football League. Gabe was prepared to sign a \$100,000 deal with the minor league team, jumping the NFL a year before the World Football League was even a figment of Gary Davidson's imagination.

If Gabriel had gone through with it—and there are people who tell you he would have—it would have been a revolutionary move for most players but scarcely more than routine for the quarterback who specializes in doing things his own way. He once signed two contracts, one with Los Angeles and the other with Oakland, hastening the peace pact between the NFL and the old American Football League. He was bothered by a sore arm for a couple of seasons and cured it himself when doctors couldn't help him. The solution? Acupuncture. He also got into Kung Fu, using the Oriental art as a method of staying in shape.

The man is obviously a free thinker, and you'd better believe he was thinking about the Las Vegas Casinos until the Rams completed a deal with Philadelphia.

The Eagles got Gabriel but the price was high. They had to surrender wide receiver Harold Jackson, the NFL's leading pass catcher the previous season, reserve fullback Tony Baker, and their top draft choices in 1974 and 1975 as well as a No. 3 pick in '75. Even with inflation, it seemed an awful lot to pay for an aging quarterback in questionable health. Philadelphia was gambling, but coming off a season in which the Eagles



Bob Griese has quarterbacked the Miami Dolphins to consecutive Super Bowl championships.

(U.P.I.)



Mean Joe Greene is about to tee off on Cleveland quarterback Mike Phipps.

(U.P.I.)

Calvin Hill is the only man in Dallas Cowboy history to have rushed for more than 1,000 yards. He gained 1,142 last year.

(U.P.I.)





Hard-running Chuck Foreman of Minnesota was the NFC's Rookie of the Year.

(U.P.I.)

Carl Eller of Minnesota is considered one of the NFL's finest defensive ends.

(U.P.I.)



Miami's Garo Yepremian connected on 25 of 37 field goal attempts last season.

(U.P.I.)



O.J. Simpson's 2,003 rushing yards set an all-time NFL record.

(U.P.I.)

Ken Stabler of Oakland was the AFC's leading passer, completing 62.7% of his attempts. (U.P.I.)



Flashy Harold Jackson led all NFL receivers with 13 touchdown catches for Los Angeles last season. (U.P.I.)

Atlanta's Claude Humphrey prepares to stop this gain by O.J. Simpson. (U.P.I.)



Roman Gabriel gave Philadelphia top-notch quarterbacking for the first time in years.

(U.P.I.)



Green Bay's John Brockington led all NFC rushers with 1,144 yards, becoming the first man in history to go over 1,000 yards rushing in each of his first three years. (U.P.I.)





John Hadl enjoyed a banner season at Los Angeles, finishing third among NFC passers.

(U.P.I.)





Minnesota's Fran Tarkenton led the Vikings to a 12-2 regular season and the NFC Central Division championship.

(U.P.I.)

Tough-running Larry Csonka gained 1,003 yards for Miami last season.

(U.P.I.)



had won only two games, scored just 12 touchdowns and 145 points, who could fault the gamble?

Fortunately for Philadelphia, the Gabriel gamble didn't come up snake eyes. Roman asserted himself in training camp and showed the Eagles he intended to be the leader they had lacked since the days of Norm Van Brocklin. "First and foremost," said All-Pro free safety Bill Bradley, "he established himself as a leader."

Running back Lee Bougness spoke for the offense. "You feel at ease with him. You don't try to second guess the quarterback. He's a great asset to the team, especially to the guys under him." The guys under him specifically were John Reaves and Rick Arrington, Philadelphia's two young quarterbacks. Both had a lot to learn and Gabriel was the perfect teacher.

"I don't even think about Roman and me competing," said Reaves. "I'm just trying to get a good grasp of our offense to where I'm confident on the field."

Gabriel appreciated his situation with Reaves. "We're rooming together, and he can learn more quickly if we work together. Helping him, that's one of the reasons I'm here."

Another reason was to make the Eagles respectable. Gabe did that, too, directing the team to a 5-8-1 season. He went through a daily ritual of soaking his chronic sore arm in a 120-degree paraffin bath and, each morning, peeling the paraffin off and then going to work. Afterwards he soaked his arm in ice. Other quarterbacks might look askance at that regimen, but the fact is that he led the league with 270 completions in a year when no other passer completed as many as 200. The challenge of the Eagles excited Gabriel.

"I've always said this team has talent," he analyzed. "This is a young team. It's making mistakes. We're doing everything the hard way. But, boy, there's a lot of desire there. There are a lot of people around here who know what it's like to lose. Now they're getting a taste of what it's like to win, and the enthusiasm is catching. This team is loaded with confidence now. They're starting to believe in themselves. You go into

the huddle and you can see it in their faces. Nobody's head goes down. They're eager. They're anxious. The attitude is 'OK, gimme that play and let's go up to the line and do it.' "

It's a new experience for the Eagles, and the man who turned it around was Gabriel. As far as the management and players are concerned, Roman Gabriel can fool with Kung Fu, let the acupuncture people poke him with their needles and treat his arm to paraffin baths as long as he wants. He has produced results—and with the Eagles, that's what counts.

JOE GREENE Ask Joe Greene what it's like to be a defensive tackle, and his eyes light up. The sparkle tells you immediately that "Mean" Joe Greene enjoys his job. Thoroughly.

"The tackles are coming on," says the huge Pittsburgh lineman who is called Mean mostly because of his style, but also because it happens to rhyme with Greene. "Things are breaking our way now."

Greene, annually chosen All-Pro, believes that pro football has evolved to the point that he and the other brawling tackles in the league are the glamour guys of the future.

"It used to be that defensive tackles were just supposed to be big dudes, guys who could hold the middle in tough situations," he said. "Mainly, they were just brawlers. The defensive ends were the flashy cats, the guys who made the spectacular quarterback traps. But nowadays, things are changing. More quick guys are playing tackle."

One of the quickest in the NFL is Mean Joe, whose speed belies his size—a massive 6-4 and 275 pounds.

Now in his sixth season with the Steelers, Greene has developed into one of the best practitioners of the violence that takes place in the middle of a pro football line.

"I like what I do," he said. "Money is nice and I don't think you'd play without it, but you don't play only for it. Football players are all on kind of an ego trip. There ain't no way you can go out there and get beat up every Sunday just for the money. You got to like it."

Greene wasn't always thrilled with this business though. He had been a consensus All-American at North Texas State and was the first defensive lineman chosen in the 1969 pro draft. "I had really been looking forward to playing pro ball," he said. "Then I was drafted by Pittsburgh and it was like everything had been taken out of me. I couldn't think of anything good about playing for the Steelers."

The man was right. There wasn't much good about the Steelers when they drafted him. The club was a perennial loser despite dedicated ownership.

"We won one game my first season there," recalled Greene. "Any of the real good college teams could have beaten us. You might say we were a little messed up. I made so many mistakes my rookie year it was unbelievable, but the other guys covered up for me. The first two years I played pro ball, I was doing the same things I did in college. My second year was a nightmare. The other teams caught up with me and I had to go back to the drawing board."

It was about that time that Mean Joe Greene got his head together. "Finally, I had to tell myself, 'OK, you don't like it (playing for a loser), but there's nothing you can do about it.' Then, I got to thinking that, sure, I came to a loser but now I could see we were starting to build something and I was a part of it.

"It's no special tribute to go to a team like Minnesota or Dallas that have been good for years. You're not really a part of it the way we are here."

So, instead of being good because of his team, Greene's team became good because of him.

Soon, Coach Chuck Noll arrived on the scene along with some first rate players, such as Terry Bradshaw and Franco Harris. Slowly but surely, the Steelers began to turn things around and Greene could see it happening right before his eyes. He was a major part of that turnaround.

"Coach Noll and Dan Rooney, the general manager, had a plan to bring the Steelers out of the dark ages," said Greene. "And the great thing they had was the courage to stick with that plan. They decided to go for youth, for high quality athletes with little experience, and then wait for them to mature."

"The Steelers had a history of trading for veterans that hadn't worked out too well. So Noll and Rooney went for youth and stuck with it. Those guys had plenty of time to panic, but they stayed with their commitment and it paid off."

Like the other young players, Greene began performing up to the vast promise he had shown in college; and other pro teams began to notice the big man wearing number 75. Soon, instead of battling one offensive lineman, Mean Joe found himself preoccupied with two of them.

"I used to get very frustrated by being double teamed all the time," he said, "but now I know we're a more effective football team when I am double teamed. That frees someone else to do the job. If I'm not being double teamed, it means I'm not being effective."

Greene has definite opinions about the work up front. "Any defensive lineman who calls himself a good defensive lineman should have the advantage over any offensive lineman," he said. "We're free to do more things than they can."

It is that freedom, Greene believes, that enables defensive tackles to stand out from the crowd. He points out that the tackles have less areas to worry about than any other defensive players. "The only play he has to stop is the one right at him and offenses don't run in

there too much because there's just not much room in the center," he explains. "They can't get rich running straight ahead. So we tackles have less worries than anybody on the defense. We can go ahead and put more personality into our position, take some chances going after the big play, take our pass rush either inside or outside. That's why the glamour's starting to come to the defensive tackles. We can do stuff that's not in the book and wind up making spectacular plays."

As the young Steelers began maturing, they changed from losers to winners. In 1972, for the first time ever, they were champions of their division, and then they beat Oakland in an emotional playoff game climaxed by an improbable tipped-pass touchdown play with five seconds left in the game. They lost the conference title game to Miami's super Dolphins but Greene was convinced the team would go all the way last year. "This team is coming on," he said proudly. "A winning team has been created here and the guys here are the people who have done it."

As the 1973 season reached its closing weeks, it became obvious that the Steelers were playoff-bound again, this time either as repeat champions of their division or wild card runnersup. But Greene was troubled, even after Pittsburgh blitzed hapless Houston 33-7.

"That was not a win," snapped Greene. "We didn't beat anybody. They gave the game to us. We won, but it doesn't mean much. If we're going anywhere, we gotta go the whole trip. We're not playing like champions. If we were playing any other good team, we wouldn't have won. This team ought to be tearing people apart and we haven't been doing it. Things haven't changed in the last two months."

As it turned out, Greene's fears were realized. In the first round of the playoffs, the Steelers were wiped out by Oakland 33-14, finishing their season two victories short of the goal—the Super Bowl.

Now it is the 1974 season and the Steelers have another chance. Where winning the division title and get-

ting to the playoffs was once the goal, it's not enough anymore. Mean Joe Greene has the Super Bowl in mind, and it is certain that if Pittsburgh's carefully assembled machine starts sputtering again, the big guy will sound off about it.

Wanna bet nobody answers him back?

BOB GRIESE It was obvious. Anyone who watched the Miami Dolphins win the American Football Conference championship game against Oakland last December knew that Bob Griese would have to throw the ball more in the Super Bowl, against Minnesota's devastating front four rush and less formidable pass defense. After all, Griese had launched only six passes against the Raiders, hardly what you'd expect in pro football's bombs-away offense.

Two weeks later, Griese moved to the controls of the Dolphins in the Super showdown against Minnesota. Predictably, he threw more passes this time around. You just don't win the Super Bowl on six forward passes. No sir. So, in the game for all the marbles with the pro football championship on the line, Griese threw more passes. *One more!*

After completing three of his six passes in the AFC title game against Oakland, Griese went 6-for-7 against the Vikings. "We kept waiting for him to throw," said Minnesota defensive back Bobby Bryant, "but it seemed that he never did."

Right. Griese's job is to put points on the scoreboard, and with horses like Larry Csonka and Mercury Morris lugging the football for him, who needs to risk interceptions by putting the ball in the air?

"I'm sure teams ask themselves what's the best way

to stop the Dolphins?" noted Griese. "The answer, of course, is to stop our success, which means stopping the run."

Since nobody ever quite managed to do that, Griese stayed with his most successful weapon, and who can blame him for that? He's always ready, though, for the day he must start cocking his arm again. "If I have to pass more and we keep winning, that's fine," he said.

Griese can throw the ball. He proved that in his first two seasons with Miami, when he launched 686 aerial bombs. Compare that with last season's paltry 218 attempts. Yet, Griese made his infrequent tosses count. He had 17 touchdown passes last season, third best in the AFC. And only eight of his passes were intercepted. His statistics graded out to make him the second best passer in the conference, behind only Oakland's Ken Stabler.

What turned Griese from the stereotype quarterback who might throw 30 passes in a game to the conservative signal caller who might not fire that many in a month, was the arrival of Coach Don Shula and the development of the Miami ground offense.

"We're proud of our running game," said Shula. "We've got the people who can run the football, so we do an awful lot of running."

That makes sense to Griese, who remembers that in the days when he was throwing all the time, the Dolphins weren't winning all the time. "A lot of quarterbacks lead the league in passing, and their teams are 4-10," said Griese. "Being a quarterback is not just throwing the football."

Griese began to alter his quarterbacking philosophy when Shula arrived in Miami. The passer and his coach form a mutual admiration society. "Griese's outstanding quality," said Shula, "is his intelligent leadership. He had the ability to comprehend what we're trying to get done."

What Shula was trying to get done was to move the Dolphins into the Super Bowl, and last January's victory over Minnesota was Miami's third straight appearance

in pro football's glamour game. That's not a bad track record.

"When you're successful, it looks so easy," said Griese thoughtfully. "But there's a lot of preparation and thought involved in his game. And sometimes things do not turn out the way you'd like."

Somehow, the Dolphins find a way to overcome any shortcomings that might crop up. There was, for example, a game against Cleveland last season. Griese threw 11 passes and completed six—three to Miami receivers and three intercepted by Cleveland defenders. Spectacular, he was not. Still, the final score was Miami 17, Cleveland 9, and that's what it's all about. "Winning," said Griese. "That's the only statistic that counts."

Griese goes into each game with an astonishingly simple plan. "You don't win a game with one pass or score 20 points in one drive," he said. "You have to realize that you're not going to score every time you have the ball. Hopefully, when the game is over, you will have more points on the board than the other team."

Simple, right? Not really, but Griese makes it seem that way much of the time.

"I think of myself looking on the situation from above," he said. "I can see moves coming and I'm ready to make 'em. When you're a rookie, you feel like one of the pieces. You can't see everybody because you're down among them and things aren't clear. But when you have a total grasp and knowledge of what's going on, then you feel you can maneuver people around, manipulate your offense and take advantage of what the defense is showing."

Griese is not a holler guy. But he is as good a leader as there is in the NFL. "I am not loud or outspoken," he admitted. "But if there is a bunch of football players ready to play football, somebody has to be in command. Taking command, that's something that, somehow, I have always been able to do."

"I don't think anybody can play quarterback without

being a leader. There is no way. The players on our offense feel I am well prepared. They understand I'm ready to play. I'm not a rah-rah type person. The way I lead is by my presence on the field."

That presence goes back to his collegiate days at Purdue. He was a two-time All American and had almost 5,000 yards in total offense for his career. He completed 130 of 215 attempts for an awesome 60.4%, gaining 1,749 yards in his senior year. His last college game was the Rose Bowl, and he guided Purdue to a 14-13 victory over Southern California in that one.

He went early in the 1967 pro draft and was considered one of the most gifted young quarterbacks in the game, with an arm second only perhaps to New York's Joe Namath. That's why it is ironic that Griese has experienced his greatest success by handing the ball off to his running backs instead of pegging it down-field.

It was his quick arm that most impressed Joe Thomas, the Dolphins' director of player personnel in 1967. "You could see he was going to be a good one," said Thomas. "He had that fluid way of moving like a thoroughbred."

The two best college quarterbacks that season were Griese and Steve Spurrier, the Heisman Trophy winner from the University of Florida. Geographically, you know which one Thomas could be expected to draft for Miami. There was just one problem. He preferred Greise.

Minnesota, picking first, went for Ron Yary and then Baltimore took Bubba Smith. That left only Atlanta ahead of Miami in the draft rotation, and Thomas was beginning to formulate excuses for choosing Mid-westerner Griese over home-grown Spurrier, when the Falcons swapped their choice to San Francisco. Then the 49ers bailed Thomas out by snatching Spurrier. When Thomas took Griese, he needed no explanation for the home fans.

Griese started his pro career as a No. 2 quarterback behind John Stofa (Remember him?). But in the open-

ing game of his first season, Stofa broke an ankle and Bob moved in. Ironically, it was a broken ankle that cost Griese almost all of the 1972 season—the year Miami won a record 17 consecutive games. Griese's leg recovered in time for the playoffs and he was at the controls when Miami picked apart Washington to win the Super Bowl.

That was a turnaround from 1971, when the Dolphins made it to the Super Bowl only to be blown out by Dallas. Griese was asked if he recalled that Dallas defeat as the Dolphins were beating the Redskins a year later.

"I just recall a loss as long as it takes to learn why we lost it," he said. "The Super Bowl is a game. That's all it is."

Then he paused.

"Except, if you win this one, you win the world championship."

And that's just what Griese has done for Miami in the last two Super Bowls.

JOHN HADL It's barely 200 miles on the freeway from San Diego to Los Angeles, but that was the shortest part of the trip quarterback John Hadl made last season. Hadl, you see, was a throwback—in more ways than one—when the San Diego Chargers traded him up the freeway to Los Angeles.

Hadl had spent 11 years in San Diego, the chief ringmaster in an aerial circus. If the old American Football League wanted to adopt a logo, the perfect one would have been Hadl drifting back and launching a long pass downfield, with Lance Alworth galloping out to catch up with the bomb. It was a mural painted over and

over with Hadl thinking nothing of throwing 40 to 50 passes a game.

"He was," said longtime San Diego Coach Sid Gillman, "the best passer I ever saw . . . end over end."

Hadl's passes weren't pretty, but they got where they were going, and that's what counts. "He was about right," said Hadl of Gillman's assessment. "But what saved me was I threw hard . . . end over end."

Don't knock it. Hadl passed for nearly 27,000 yards and 201 touchdowns in those 11 seasons at San Diego. He and Gillman were tuned to the same wavelength and worked well together. But when Gillman stepped out of the Chargers' picture, Hadl's days in San Diego were numbered. Hadl just never hit it off with the new coach, Harland Svare, and his offensive coordinator, Bob Schnelker.

"Everybody says I didn't like the conservative approach in San Diego," said Hadl. "That isn't true. You've got to have a running attack, but when you throw the ball, you have to have the passing structure to be able to do it. In my opinion, the passing game was limited and didn't have any flexibility to it and couldn't adjust to situations during a ball game. The imagination wasn't there and that's what it takes to beat the teams you have to beat to get into the playoffs."

Hadl locked horns with Schnelker and it was a stand-off. "There was a lack of communication and common line of thinking between Schnelker and me. There wasn't any area for suggestions. It was a one-way deal, and as far as I was concerned, he didn't take advantage of the experience that I and the rest of the offense had. We were a veteran offensive team that had been producing a lot of points."

The front office and quarterback agreed that the best thing for both parties would be a trade. "San Diego was the only team I had ever known," said Hadl, "and the town is great. I loved it there, but I had to leave. I wasn't only hurting myself. I was hurting the club because everybody knew my feelings. It was a negative situation that wasn't helping the franchise."

So the trade was arranged, the Chargers accommodating Hadl by keeping him in the West, sending him to the Rams. In exchange, the Chargers received Coy Bacon and Bob Thomas. "I really appreciated it when they traded me to L.A. I wanted to get with a good organization that had a chance to win and get to the playoffs."

Hadl's arrival in Los Angeles gave the Rams two first-rate quarterbacks. That was one too many for holdover Roman Gabriel. "I know that [owner] Carroll Rosenbloom and [general manager] Don Klosterman won't say it," said Gabriel, "but I'm sure they feel John Hadl is their No. 1 guy." Gabriel has never been No. 2 and he wasn't about to play second string. So he demanded to be traded, preferring to go elsewhere rather than battle Hadl for his job.

Gabriel wound up in Philadelphia, with part of the price for him being wide receiver Harold Jackson. That gave Hadl a deep threat to work with, but instead of having a racehorse offense as he had with Alworth in the Charger days, the quarterback proved that he could change his approach to moving a football team.

"Times have changed," said Hadl. "It's a different era. Football today is a game of turnovers, field position and mistakes. The top teams run the ball until they see an opportunity for a quick strike. To win in this league now, you have to do what we are trying to do. You have to play consistent defense, maintain control of the ball and master a flexible passing game."

In the 1973 pre-season, the Rams threatened to come completely apart at the seams. New Coach Chuck Knox' methods took awhile to begin paying dividends, but fortunately the pieces fell into place as soon as the season started.

"We knew in pre-season it was a matter of getting to know each other and the new system," said Hadl. "I knew we had the players to win and the coaches to win and that it was just a matter of time, of getting to know each other. The fans didn't understand this and we

were losing, so they gave us hell. That didn't bother me, because I knew."

Hadl was right. The Rams won their first six games, lost their next two by a total of three points and then won their last six, finishing 12-2 to achieve the best record in their history. They won the National Football Conference West Division title and they did it with a quarterback who threw only when it was necessary.

Hadl's statistics didn't approach those of his past years. He threw only 258 passes compared with 370 a year earlier in San Diego, and a career high of 440 in 1968. The number of attempts was a full-season career low for him. Only once before in his career did he complete less than his 135 connections of last year. Nevertheless, he managed more than 2,000 yards and 22 touchdowns.

"Yeah, everything's down," said Hadl, examining a statistical rundown of his season. "My attempts, completions, touchdowns, interceptions. The only thing that's up is winning."

And that really tells all there is to tell about Hadl. "Winning solves everything," he said. Hadl discovered that he could win without playing bombs away and so he stuck to the ground, letting Lawrence McCutcheon and Jim Bertelsen pile up the yardage and set up the ultimate strikes to Jackson, Jack Snow and his other receivers. Instead of fighting the zone defense, Hadl learned to live with it.

"The thing that hurts offensive teams the most," said the veteran quarterback, "is that zone defenses make interceptions more likely. Against man-for-man defenses, if your receiver is covered, you can throw the ball over his head deliberately, or in front of him. But against zone defenses, there's always a chance somebody will intercept you—somebody who is slightly out of your line of vision, perhaps. Even if you throw what seems to be a perfect pass, a linebacker might come out of nowhere and intercept you. As a result, the good teams today don't throw much unless they have to."

Hadl claims that the Rams' passing game could be

every bit as explosive as the one the old Chargers displayed. "The Rams have great receivers and a great blocking line and, throughout the game, I'm always thinking pass, looking for what's open. We could be passing more . . . but most coaches believe the more you throw, the more interceptions you throw. The zone will get you if you don't watch out. It's a simple percentage thing. If you can run, it's better to run."

That doesn't mean Hadl has shunned the pass completely. "You can't run scared of interceptions either, you know. You've got to hit them when you should. Then you go back to your running game."

Having lived through the era of the bomb and seen it displaced by the zone defense, Hadl believes the pass is past.

"Sure, I remember when we threw 40 passes a week, but if you did that now, you'd lead the league in defeats and interceptions. With the agility they have today in those four front guys, if they play pass on every play, they're going to break down your protection occasionally. Your receiver will get knocked off stride occasionally. You'll throw bad passes occasionally. And with seven guys back there playing zone defense against four or five receivers, the odds are against you."

So Hadl changed more than just his home address when the Chargers traded him those 200 miles up the freeway to LA. Did the change work? "Football is fun again," said the quarterback who is passing less and enjoying it more. "I haven't been so happy in a long time."

Neither, for that matter, have the Los Angeles Rams.

CALVIN HILL This will come as a shock to venerable Ivy League scholars, but they don't teach all there is to learn in those hallowed halls . . . at least not to a football player.

Calvin Hill, Yale '69, is a case in point. The bumps and bruises of his first three NFL seasons took their toll and taught Hill a few things about those guys working in pro football's trenches. The lesson has paid off in two straight 1,000-yard rushing seasons for him—the first ever for any Dallas Cowboy player.

"As a rookie, I was going pretty much on natural ability alone," said Hill. "I just did what comes naturally, and it worked out pretty well." Well enough for 942 yards rushing and 232 more yards on 20 pass receptions. He also gained 125 yards on four kickoff returns, giving him one yard less than 1,300 in total offense. Not bad for a rookie season. The future seemed bright, but it wasn't—at least for the next two years.

"I kept getting hurt," said Hill, who barely topped his rookie season rushing total in the next two years combined. "Finally, after the 1971 season, I had knee surgery."

Any athlete coming off a knee operation will tell you that there are other scars besides the ones left by the surgeon. "I was physically limited because of my knee," said Hill. "I had to concentrate on inside running and power running. I learned how to read my blockers better. I became more aware of my blockers and their individual strengths and tendencies."

When he finished the year, convalescing Calvin had set club records with 245 carries and 1,036 yards rush-

ing—the first 1,000-yard season in Dallas history. He also led the team with 43 catches for 364 yards.

"I'm less prone to run over people now," said Hill. "If I can get around them, I don't try to run over them anymore. I'm using my knowledge more now than I used to. I pretty much know what's going on when I'm running. I know why things happen, and when something breaks down, I know how to compensate for it. I just wish I had this knowledge when I was younger."

The secret is finesse. "He knows where his main blocking is coming from," said Ed Hughes, the Cowboys' offensive backfield coach, "and he has the ability to select the strongest block. He has a great knack for spotting daylight."

The daylight was still there last season when Hill was back in the exclusive 1,000-yard club again. He finished with 1,142 yards, only two less than John Brockington, the NFC's rushing leader. That made him the eighth running back in NFL history to produce consecutive 1,000-yard seasons—no small accomplishment.

Hill doesn't think about 1,000-yard seasons. His limited production in his second and third pro seasons, and repeated injuries, made playing time the most important commodity for him. "What I want to do is play 14 games and carry the ball 20 times a game," he said. "If I do that, the yardage will take care of itself."

Every so often, Hill thinks about doing things other than tucking the football under his arm and running with it. Other things like playing tight end. "I'd love it," he has said. "Tight end is my natural position. Even when I was a quarterback in high school, I thought about it."

Actually, Hill was drafted out of Yale as a tight end. Only injuries to Danny Reeves and Craig Baynham in his rookie season moved Calvin into the backfield, after the College All Star Game.

"Before I left, I'd had about three days at tight end, two at linebacker and two at running back," Hill

recalled. "When I came back, the others were hurt so I had to stay at running back."

And if Reeves and Baynham were healthy when Hill returned from the All Star Game, what would have happened? "I'd have been an All Pro tight end," laughed Calvin.

Hill is taller than most running backs—standing 6-4. "It's difficult for me," he said. "I have to stay low and I'm a natural high runner. Even my size is too tall. I never felt at home at running back."

Still, Calvin made a home for himself there. He worked at it and it wasn't easy. "If I had the knowledge I did last year with the physical ability of my rookie year, it'd have been incredible. I was looking at films of my rookie year. Before I hurt my knee. I was running lighter, quicker on my feet then. I'll probably never be that way again. But now I have experience."

He got plenty of that last year when Coach Tom Landry had no reliable backup man and couldn't afford to spell Calvin. "I'm concerned," said Landry. "I would like to rest him, but I can't. It would be too great a risk. We were able to spell Calvin some last year with Mike Montgomery, but Mike is at flanker this year. I can't protect him this year."

So, Hill carried the load with very little relief. "He takes more punishment than anybody," said teammate Bob Newhouse, shaking his head in admiration at Hill's durability. Calvin couldn't always hide the bumps and bruises.

"Sometimes it takes a few days for the soreness to wear off," said Hill. "After the Philadelphia game, I was so sore, I couldn't stand for anybody to touch me."

Another teammate, Bob Hayes, noted that Hill seemed to be driven by the desire to play in the Super Bowl. "He wants more than anything to be a factor in the Super Bowl," said Hayes. "Mostly, he's missed out in the two Super Bowls we've been in. But now he's stronger and tougher and has more enthusiasm than I've ever seen."

In the opening game of the 1973 playoffs, Hill lugged

the football 25 times for 97 yards. Then, in the fourth quarter, he bobbled a handoff and in the ensuing struggle for the football, he suffered a dislocated elbow. It ended his season and, for all practical purposes, the Cowboys' season as well. Earlier, Landry had said, "The whole season rests on keeping him healthy. When you lose your big guy, you are in trouble."

Without Hill for the NFC championship game, the Cowboys were indeed in trouble and were wiped out by Minnesota. The whole Dallas team rushed for 90 yards in that game, five less than Hill had gained all by himself the week before.

That meant no Super Bowl for the Cowboys and left Hill and his teammates watching television when Miami and Minnesota battled for the championship. It was not a situation Calvin enjoyed.

You'd think that two straight 1,000-yard seasons would soothe his bitterness at missing Super Sunday. It didn't.

"Gaining 1,000 yards . . . that's only an indication of a lot of carries and staying healthy," he said. "I had two goals this season. To stay healthy and go to the Super Bowl."

He achieved one of them, and in 1974 he'll go for the other as well.

CLAUDE HUMPHREY The door to the Atlanta orphanage popped open and a group of youngsters laughed and squealed in delight. In stepped Claude Humphrey, aggressive defensive end of the Falcons. Then he handed out jelly beans and chocolate eggs, dressed as the Easter bunny. Claude Humphrey?

That was for Easter. Eight months later, dressed as

Santa Claus, he showed up at two children's hospitals. He distributed stockings full of goodies.

Claude Humphrey, who eats quarterbacks on Sundays, displays his gentle soul the rest of the week.

"I know one thing," said Jerry Sisemore, a rookie offensive tackle for the Philadelphia Eagles who met Humphrey last winter when Claude was wearing a football uniform instead of his Easter bunny or Santa Claus suit. "I don't know what he looks like behind a white beard, but inside a helmet, he's awful tough."

Bob Brown, who has been around the National Football League much longer than Sisemore, could have told the Eagles' rookie that. "Humphrey's a fabulous athlete," said Brown, veteran tackle of the Oakland Raiders. "A helluva defensive end. I'm glad when I'm through with him."

For Humphrey, each Sunday's game is like a crusade that begins a couple of days earlier. From Monday until Friday, Humphrey is Mr. Nice Guy, walking his show dog, a 90-pound Doberman pinscher. Picture that combination sauntering down the sidewalk some dark night. Humphrey, 6-5 and 255 pounds, hardly needs the Doberman for protection.

Come Friday, Humphrey begins working himself up for his weekend frenzy. He believes that to succeed in his job, which is pursuing quarterbacks, he must have total concentration. His method of achieving that is to impose a state of solitary confinement on himself. He leaves his suburban home early Saturday morning, careful not to disturb his wife and two daughters, who are still sleeping.

Humphrey gets to the stadium well before his teammates. He jogs and watches game films until the rest of the squad arrives for practice. Afterwards, the team will check into a motel and most of the players allow themselves the luxury of a phone call to their families. Not big Claude. That might interfere with his concentration.

On Sunday, the buildup bursts with a fury on the field, where Humphrey attempts to hound, pound and

hammer to the ground the other team's quarterback. Even when he doesn't disturb his prey, the quarterback will know Humphrey is around. That's because Claude likes to talk to the other team's passer.

Humphrey's favorite location for the conversation is on the ground after he's sacked the quarterback. But their discussions are by no means limited to those situations. "I get into some pretty interesting conversations," he said.

After he was drafted by Atlanta out of Tennessee State in 1968, Claude was no shy rookie. There was the time, for example, when he burst into Baltimore's backfield and had this nice little talk with Johnny Unitas, who, at the time, was probably the best quarterback in football. "John," said Humphrey politely, "I'm going to run you out of this league."

Unitas was suitably impressed. "He looked at me sort of funny," said Humphrey, "and said, 'You've got two chances—slim and none.'"

Johnny U. survived the threat, and that's all right with Humphrey, who contends all the talk is quite harmless. "There's nothing violent in it," said Humphrey. "It's just joking." Coach Norm Van Brocklin frowns on all the talk, and Claude knows it. "It's a habit I formed in high school and it's hard to break. I happen to be inclined to go along with Coach Van Brocklin. It's not part of the game. Football is a serious business; we're out there to win."

If the Falcons are to win, then Humphrey and his friends on the defensive line must spend some time in the enemy backfield. Claude doesn't always get there by the most direct route. "I take an awful lot of chances," he said. "It's not a free charge, but my primary responsibility is to get to the quarterback. It's only a chance when I miss and when I go inside, I'm 90% certain I'll get to the quarterback. I won't do anything when the odds are bad."

The key is Humphrey's speed—his ability to lure his opponent across the line to commit himself, and then the speed to sidestep the charge for an unmolested ride

into the backfield. Sounds easy, but really, it isn't. Not if you believe Humphrey. "Every week I play against a good tackle," he said. "Everybody wants to beat on me, poor little old me."

You don't have to run any benefits for poor old Claude. He can take care of himself. "He gets real upset if he gets beat on a play," said an opposing tackle. "He'll come back and give you a couple of extra head slaps next time."

Humphrey is particularly proud of his durability. He has missed only two games in six NFL seasons and he doesn't mind playing hurt. Once, he almost was leveled in a game against Dallas. He had taken an inside route, anticipating a pass. "A truck with the number 32 ran over me," recalled Humphrey. That's Calvin Hill's number.

"I was looking for the pass and I really wasn't ready for him," Claude continued. "He wasn't jiving. He was coming."

The collision cost Humphrey a front tooth and a mouse under his eye. "On the play before that, I had seriously sprained my ankle," said Humphrey. "But I kept playing."

Of course. What would you expect from Mr. Nice Guy—who, once he doffs his Easter Bunny and Santa Claus costumes and dons football regalia, becomes Mr. Not-So-Nice Guy.

HAROLD JACKSON Not so many years ago, pro football was a game of bombs with fleet flankers racing downfield for those long, exciting passes that sometimes traveled 50 and 60 yards in the air. It was an exciting time, except for those poor souls

who had to work in the defensive secondaries around the league. For them, it was mostly frustrating.

Now NFL coaches aren't standing on the sidelines just to give television cameras something to focus on. And just to prove it, some of the National Football League's best brains began working for a defense against those air strafings that were causing cornerbacks and safeties men sleepless nights. The solution, they decided, was a zone defense with defensive players double teaming the wide receivers instead of trying to cover the speed merchants man-to-man.

The ploy worked like a charm and most teams put the bombs away. There were, however, some holdouts: for example, little Harold Jackson, who ate up zone defenses and enjoyed every delicious moment of it.

"I love zone defenses," said Jackson, "because the defensive team has to run to get into the defense. They disguise it, and then they run into it. I get there before they do. I use my speed to beat the defensive backs as they're dropping back. Then I use my moves to fake them out."

In 1969, before the zone, Jackson led the league with 65 catches for the Philadelphia Eagles. Then, for two years, Harold worked out his own defense for the new defense. The solution accomplished, Jackson led the league again with 62 receptions in 1972.

It was after that season that Los Angeles decided to do some body shuffling. The Rams acquired quarterback John Hadl from San Diego, leaving the incumbent signal caller, Roman Gabriel, most unhappy. Gabe decided he'd rather work someplace else . . . someplace like Philadelphia. The Eagles were anxious to get Gabriel but LA's price was high. It included a fistful of draft choices and a couple of players including, ironically, Jackson.

Los Angeles demanding Jackson was ironic because the Rams originally owned fleet Harold. They drafted him out of Jackson State in the 12th round of the 1968 collegiate draft. George Allen was the Ram coach in those days and football fans know his feeling about

draft choices—especially 12th-round choices. So Jackson spent 1968 on the Ram taxi squad. The following year, Allen packaged Jackson and defensive end John Zook to Philadelphia in a trade for running back Izzy Lang. It does not rank as one of Allen's best transactions.

At Philadelphia, Jackson developed into an instant star. "Even though the Rams were a contender, I was happy to be going where I would have a better chance to play, because that's what you want most." That and success—two things Jackson achieved with the Eagles. He discovered, however, that there are other things in this game. Things like winning.

"It was great and cool to say you led the league," said Jackson, "but it didn't mean that much since the team wasn't winning. It was hard to really feel great about the season when the goal of winning wasn't accomplished."

The trade to Los Angeles gave Jackson a light at the end of the tunnel. And he ran for it.

Waiting for him was Hadl, and the veteran quarterback was excited about the prospect of working with Harold. "I always knew he was a great one," said Hadl, "one of the best in football. He has led the league a couple of times in the last few years, so he has to be good."

Hadl quickly found out just how good Jackson was. Early in the season, Harold caught seven passes for 238 yards against Dallas. Four of the receptions were for touchdowns. "There's two things going on in Los Angeles that are helping me," said Jackson after that game. "One is that we've got a real good running attack and we've been throwing long after faking a run. The second is John Hadl."

Hadl couldn't say enough about Jackson. "We were fortunate in being able to work so closely together and so well in our thinking about defenses and pass routes. It's been a great experience."

It became obvious quickly that in Hadl and Jackson, the Rams owned perhaps the most explosive passing

battery in the NFL, zone defenses notwithstanding. "Well," said Hadl, "there are zones and there are zones. Jackson is so quick there are a lot of places he can go in a 15-yard area. He can find the seam in a zone. He is the greatest deep threat in the league. I try to wait for his last move and, after that, I have to hope I can throw it far enough."

Jackson showed electrifying speed more than once last season. "I only run as fast as I have to," he said. "And with Hadl putting that ball out, I have to find some more boost to catch up to the ball."

"Jackson is like radar," said Lee Bennett, Los Angeles' receiver coach. "The thing that makes him is his ability to run the ball down."

Running is what Jackson has always done best. Asked about his success, he smiled. "There's no big secret in it," he said. "I just run as fast as I can down-field and Hadl lays the ball to me. I believe I can beat anyone on a post pattern."

Jackson grew up in Hattiesburg, Miss., and still returns there during the off-season. He owns a clothing store which three sisters and a brother operate for him. It was in Hattiesburg that Harold did his first running—to and from the market on errands for his mother. It was also there that he caught his first footballs and developed the style that has made him the NFL's most feared receiver. Of his 40 catches last season, 13 went for touchdowns. His 21.9 yards per catch was the best average of his career.

"There are three simple tricks to catching a football," explained Jackson. "The first is total concentration on the ball, and that's the most important. You also have to spread your fingers as far as they'll spread. But then, just as the ball hits, you have to relax your hands as much as possible and still leave your fingers split. Try those two things sometime and you'll see how much we have to practice to make a soft target. If your hands are tensed up, it's like a ball hitting a wall."

Jackson and his soft hands gave the Rams their most explosive receiver since the days of Elroy "Crazylegs"

Hirsch. His style is very much like Hirsch's with over-the-head catches and lightning-like speed.

Hadl, one of Jackson's most ardent boosters, says, "Harold has great body control. He has the foot action of a boxer, great moves. I had a great receiver at San Diego in Lance Alworth. He and Jackson are much alike in getting to the spot where the ball will come."

"I can read Jackson's moves pretty well now. I can sight him downfield and tell by the way he's running, some little thing, when he is going to plant and which foot he's going to cut on—right or left—during a play."

"When I first came into the league," said Jackson, "every play was a foot race. To catch a pass, you had to outrun a defender. Now, you've got to do two things, outrun them and outthink them."

Hurrying Harold has managed the extra work quite nicely, thank you.

O.J. SIMPSON Jim Brown had fair warning.

A dozen or so years ago when Brown was rushing his way into the National Football League record book, O.J. Simpson was rushing his way through the streets of San Francisco. He was the leader of the gang and consequently felt an obligation to pop off every so often, just to prove his importance.

One day, Brown wandered into a soda parlor and bumped into young Simpson. Another teen-ager might have been flabbergasted, meeting a pro football star that way. But Brown didn't fluster O.J.

"Man, you're not so hot," said Simpson, mouthing off to one of the NFL's greatest runners. "Someday I'm gonna break all your records."

The threat didn't exactly cause Brown to gasp. "He

hardly looked at me," Simpson recalled later. "He just kind of walked away smiling." A few years later, Brown retired from pro football at the height of his career and O.J. Simpson started attracting rushing attention at USC. Eventually, Simpson graduated to professional football. Then, in 1973, he carried out the brash prophecy he had made in that soda parlor. He all but wiped Jim Brown right out of the NFL record book.

You can save all of the adjectives. They would add nothing to Simpson's rushing accomplishments last year. The most eloquent description of what O.J. did is inscribed in two lines of type in the NFL record book. They say:

Most yards rushing, One Season—2,003 By O.J. Simpson, Buffalo, 1973.

Most Yards Rushing, One Game—250 By O.J. Simpson, Buffalo, 1973.

The 250 yards came in Simpson's first game of the season, a one-man show against the New England Patriots. It wiped out the old single game record of 247 yards held by Willie Ellison. But more important than that, it put Simpson on a 14-week countdown with immortality. The target, almost immediately, became Brown's awesome single season record of 1,863 rushing yards, established in 1963.

That same season, Brown had set another record by rushing for more than 100 yards in nine of Cleveland's 14 games. It was another mark that Simpson had his eye on.

For the next month, O.J. shredded defenses. He gained 103 yards against San Diego, 123 against the New York Jets, 171 against Philadelphia and 166 against Baltimore. After five games, the man they call Juice had squeezed out 813 yards. At the same point in his record season a decade earlier, Brown had 787.

Then, in Week Six, O.J. fell behind. He managed only 55 yards against world champion Miami. Brown had gained 144 against Philadelphia in his sixth game. But O.J. bounced right back with a big 157-yard day

against Kansas City in the seventh game, going over 1,000 yards for the season. He had accomplished in seven games what quality running backs do in 14.

The next week it was 79 yards against New Orleans and a week later, 99 against Cincinnati. With five games left, O.J. had 1,203 yards, 90 less than Brown had after nine games in his big season. O.J. fell further behind the next week when he gained 120 yards against Miami. In his 10th game, Brown had rushed for 154. The gap now was 124 yards with only four games left to play.

Still, there was hope. Brown had two low-yardage games in his final four, gaining 51 yards against Dallas and 61 against Detroit. He averaged 104 yards per game in those last four games. Simpson would need 135 per game to catch him.

O.J. got 124 against Baltimore and 137 against Atlanta. With two weeks left, he was 279 yards away from Brown's record. It would take 140 yards per game in each of his last two outings to do it. In the season's first 12 weeks, O.J. had reached that total four times. Now he had to do it twice in the last two weeks.

New England and New York were the opponents and both were going nowhere. Simpson, however, was going somewhere and he made the road much easier by penetrating New England's defenses for 219 of the 279 yards he needed. It was his 10th 100-yard week, breaking one Brown record. Now, he was on the threshold of another. Sixty-one more yards and Brown's record would be his. For a solid week, that number—61—was etched in Simpson's mind. "When you get close to a record, you think to yourself, 'If I'm this close, I might as well get it,'" said Simpson.

And that's just what O.J. did. It snowed on the final Sunday of the season in New York, a development that worried Simpson a bit. "When I saw the snow, I felt bad," he said. "But then I remembered that it snowed the week before in Buffalo and it turned out to be okay."

It was okay this time too. With press box statisticians

in constant communication with the Buffalo bench to carry word of his progress to the team, O.J. went after the record. Time after time, he ran at the Jets and with four minutes, 26 seconds left in the first period, Simpson followed a block from his running sidekick, Jim Braxton, for a six-yard gain and the record.

"I landed on Jim's back," said Simpson, "and he turned over and asked me, 'Was the hole big enough?' I looked around and saw everybody jumping up and down and cheering and everything and I smiled and said to him: 'It seems all right, I guess.' "

The Bills were understandably happy. They had achieved for the popular Simpson a goal they had been working towards for 2½ months. Still, their celebration seemed restrained. It was almost as if they had something else on their minds . . . something to *really* celebrate.

By halftime, Simpson had 108 yards for the game and 1,911 for the season. He also had 30 minutes of football left, 30 minutes to achieve the unthinkable—2,000 yards. "More, Juice, more," his teammates urged. "Let's get more." His offensive line worked like men possessed, opening huge gaps for Simpson to run through. "They kept phoning down from the press box so we knew how much we needed," said offensive guard Reggie McKenzie. "There was no way they were going to stop us from getting it for the Juice."

With 5:56 left on the clock, the Bills got it for him. Simpson followed McKenzie for seven yards and the Buffalo bench went wild, rushing onto the field to carry off their man. "All week long, I was worried about 61 yards," mused Simpson, "and I ended up with 2,000. Fantastic! Fantastic!"

Simpson has always insisted that football is a team game and he has made a special effort to prevent his individual achievements from overshadowing the team. So after he broke Brown's record and hit 2,003 yards for the year, a post-game press conference was arranged. O.J. arrived, but not alone. He brought with him the entire Bills' offensive unit and introduced each

of them to the assembled writers and broadcasters. "These are the cats who made the record possible," said Simpson. "They did the job all year long."

The year earned Simpson a long string of honors, including the S. Rae Hickok Belt as professional athlete of the year. And at every banquet and dinner he attended, O.J. made a point of reminding his listeners that the 2,003 yards represented a team, not an individual effort.

"People wonder why I insist on crediting the offensive line," said O.J. "Well, my line took the flack my first three years when I wasn't gaining. Everybody said 'poor O.J., he has no blocking.' They should get some of the credit now that I'm gaining."

Simpson doesn't believe his record is unreachable. "Someone will come along and break it, but I hope to stay in the league until these guys on the offensive line get so old that no young back can get behind them to break my record."

Somewhere in the country, there's a youngster thinking that O.J.'s not such a superman and that 2,000 yards is no big deal. Simpson knows that because he remembers how he told off Brown in that soda parlor. Later the two men became friends, and O.J. had occasion to ask if Brown remembered that early confrontation. He did not.

"Naturally, he didn't remember it at all," said Simpson. "Why should he? Just some dumb kid."

The dumb kid grew into an exceptional man.

KEN STABLER Kenny Stabler was not a National Football League rookie last season. It only seemed that way because he was a new face on the quarterback block. Actually, he has been wearing

Oakland's handsome black and silver uniform since 1968, when the Raiders made him their No. 2 draft choice.

Stabler's first two years as a pro were washouts because of a bad knee and some personal problems. He spent part of the time playing for the Spokane Shockers of the Continental League and the rest of it trying to retrieve the form he had demonstrated at Alabama, where Coach Bear Bryant called him the finest quarterback he'd ever had.

That statement from Bryant set some tongues wagging, especially since one of Stabler's predecessors at Alabama was none other than Broadway Joe Namath. Stabler laughed off the suggestion that Namath might be No. 2 signal caller in Crimson Tide history.

"Joe's the best passer there is," said Stabler. "Bear just says things like that. You just watch—he'll say the same thing about his quarterback this year."

Stabler has a warm spot in his heart for Namath because it was Joe Willie who led the recruiting team when Alabama went after Kenny. Succeeding Namath was no easy chore, but the left-handed Stabler filled Joe Willie's white shoes to perfection. In Stabler's junior and senior years, Alabama had a 19-2-1 record. Kenny also piloted the club to a 34-7 rout of Nebraska in the 1967 Sugar Bowl game, where he was named MVP after totaling 285 yards. His two-season Alabama varsity totals were 3,292 yards and a 60% passing percentage. The numbers were impressive, but Stabler was worried.

"The knee really slowed me down my final season at Alabama," he recalled. "I led the Tide in running my junior year, but I couldn't run as a senior. Going into the seventh game, I had lost more yards on the ground than I had gained. But I did some running in the final games to finish on the plus side."

Stabler knew that if his knee was gone, so was his mobility . . . and without that commodity, a pro quarterback is just a sitting duck for hard charging enemy linemen. It took two years of rehabilitation before Stabler's knee was strong enough to stand the rigors of

the professional game. But by the time Stabler was ready physically, he had another problem: Daryle Lamonica had asserted himself as the Raiders' quarterback and there was no budging him out of the job.

Stabler was reduced to a backup role and, like most backup quarterbacks, he inherited the job of holding the ball on field goal and extra-point attempts. That was an important development for him because the Raiders' placement expert is elderly George Blanda, who has quarterbacked a few professional teams in his time. Stabler decided to make the most of his time on the sidelines while Lamonica was running the show. Kenny would locate Blanda and stand next to him to discuss the offensive part of football.

"I watched Lamonica closely and what the offensive players did on every play," said Stabler. "George [Blanda] was a big help too. I sat by him on the bench. I really picked his brains. He taught me how to beat the blitz. I would call every play and check with him to see how he would have called it. He said he's too old to coach. But he'd make a great one. He's so damned smart."

Stabler got limited work as a quarterback for the next three seasons. The Raiders tended to give the football to Blanda if Lamonica's offense stalled. Stabler was strictly third string until late in the 1972 season. Then Coach John Madden began to show more faith in the third-string passer they call Snake, and when Lamonica was losing 6-0 with time running out in the opening playoff game, Stabler got the bullpen call.

That was when Kenny showed why he's called Snake. He moved the Raiders into Steeler territory and then took off on a 30-yard touchdown run that must have covered twice as much distance by the time all of Stabler's direction-changes were completed. It reminded Kenny of his high school days in Foley, Ala., when his swivel-hipped runs led a coach to say, "Boy, you run just like a snake." Of such idle cracks are nicknames born, and after that, he was Snake Stabler.

His heroics against Pittsburgh went out the window

when the Steelers manufactured some last-minute magic of their own on a deflected pass caught by Franco Harris for the game-winning TD. But Stabler had created a positive impression in Coach Madden's mind. When the zone defenses began to bug Lamonica's Mad Bomber approach last season, Madden waved in Stabler again. This time, it was for keeps.

The Raiders were 1-2 when Stabler took over in Game 4 against St. Louis. Immediately, he turned things around. The club, up tight before, seemed to relax with the Snake at the controls. It reached a peak four weeks later against Baltimore. That was the day Stabler squeezed his way into the NFL record book.

The week before, he had suffered a sprained ankle and dislocated toe against Denver and was listed as doubtful in the weekly medical report. But when the Oakland offense trotted onto the field for the first time against Baltimore, Kenny was with them, still hobbling a bit. So it was obvious that this would be a passing day for the Snake. And what a passing day it turned out to be.

Stabler attempted 29 passes against the Colts. He completed 25 of them, including an awesome 14 in a row. He gained 304 yards and his 86.2% completion figure broke the NFL standard of 85.7% set in October, 1945, 14 months before Stabler was born.

It was his second straight 300-yard week and two of the passes he didn't complete actually were caught, but out of bounds. The show sent Stabler soaring to first place among American Conference passers, a position he held the rest of the season.

Snake finished the season with three yards less than 2,000 and fired 19 touchdown passes. His completion percentage was a remarkable 62.7, with only 97 of the 260 passes he launched all year failing to find their mark.

Stabler accepted success humbly. "The offensive line and my receivers deserve most of the credit for all this stuff," he said. "They made my job easy. I got a lot of time to throw."

"The important thing," said Al Davis, major domo of the Raiders, "is we're winning with Stabler. He's so accurate, so poised. And he doesn't throw interceptions."

The shift from Lamonica to Stabler changed the Raiders' offensive approach. There were less go-for-broke bombs and more short passes, slower but safer. "We're still getting used to playing with one another," said Stabler. "It's more a matter of me getting used to them than them to me. They run the same patterns and same blocking assignments whether it's me or Daryle in there. I know the guys have confidence in me. I can feel it."

Stabler's philosophy as a quarterback has been molded more by Blanda than Lamonica, simply because Blanda was available on the sidelines to have his brain picked by the Snake.

"We talk about how teams cover on certain plays and what plays might go against certain defenses," said Stabler. "I like to throw short passes more than Daryle does. But every quarterback has his own style, and it doesn't matter what your style is if you win with it. Coach Bryant used to tell me at Alabama, 'You don't have to call the game the way I tell you to, but you better win if you don't.'"

The Raiders did their share of winning with Stabler's style last year, and you can expect Madden to stay with it in 1974.

FRAN TARKENTON A reputation can be a terrible thing. Whispers can destroy a man in no time at all. Once a man is pigeonholed, he can spend a lifetime trying to shake the tag. Meet Fran

Tarkenton, one man who succeeded in shedding the label marked "loser."

For a dozen years, Fran the Scram excited fans with his quarterbacking antics, first for Minnesota, then the New York Giants and, finally, again for the Vikings. He'd run the offense with the guts of a burglar, never hesitating to take off with the football if the situation called for it. And given some of the offensive lines he had to work with, the situation often called for it.

The offensive pyrotechnics were exciting. Francis had as good an arm as any passer in the league. But when he couldn't locate his receivers, the little guy would start sprinting, sometimes darting as many yards from one sideline to the other as he was moving down-field. Then, when the season ended, his team would have a 7-7 record or 8-6 or 6-8 and the playoffs were out of the question.

Fran Tarkenton, the whispers said, was a loser. He was a .500 quarterback who could never lift an ordinary team out of the ordinary and might bring a promising team down to mediocrity.

Tark heard the whispers—he'd have to be deaf not to—and they ate at him. Then came his chance to turn the tables. The Giants returned him to Minnesota in a huge 1972 trade. At last Fran would be working for a contending team, a team that had always had everything except a first class signal caller. So Tarkenton took over and piloted the Vikings to—you guessed it—a sorry 7-7 season. He set club passing records for most attempts (378), completions (215) and most consecutive attempts without interception (115). For most quarterbacks, it would have been a successful season. For Tarkenton, it was merely reinforcement for his critics who said Fran simply was not a winner.

For an ordinary guy, repeated failures to contribute to the construction of a winner might be a source of constant aggravation. But it just wasn't so for Tarkenton, who has always had a sense of who and what he is, the whispers notwithstanding. Let the critics talk, thought Fran the Scram.

But let's face it, Tarkenton is a pro—and a pro wants to win above everything else. So despite his cool exterior, you can bet that deep down, Francis Asbury Tarkenton, son of a baptist minister, wanted to taste that one long sip of success. Welcome to 1973.

The season started perfectly for the Vikings and stayed that way for nine weeks. Minnesota was the first NFL team to qualify for the playoffs and that's when newsmen started buzzing Tarkenton, reminding him of the age-old NFL adage. "A scrambler," it says, "has never won a championship."

Tarkenton played it cool. "I am going to do my best to get there," he said when asked about the Vikings' prospects to win the NFC crown. "But if we don't, I am not going to blow my brains out. Never having been a member of a championship team is not a frustration. It would just be a fun-go if we got there. You know, the icing on the cake."

The Vikes winning streak ended in the season's 10th week when the fired-up Atlanta Falcons beat Minnesota on a Monday night. Even though the Vikings had already clinched a playoff berth, there was plenty at stake in that meeting between Minnesota and Atlanta. For one thing, the Falcons were battling for a playoff berth of their own. For another, the Vikings had dreams of a Miami-like perfect season dancing in their heads. And for a third, the Falcons' coach is Norm Van Brocklin, who might be described as the greatest Fran Tarkenton detractor in a world full of Fran Tarkenton detractors.

Van Brocklin and Tarkenton had clashed during the quarterback's first stay at Minnesota—a clash over philosophies that never was settled and ended only with Tarkenton being traded to the Giants and Van Brocklin leaving the Viking coaching job.

The essence of their clash was Van Brocklin's conservative bent that was and is diametrically opposed to Tarkenton's free-lance quarterbacking style. "You won't win any titles with Tarkenton at quarterback," Van Brocklin has said more than once. To which Tark-

enton has replied: "Quarterbacks don't win titles. Teams win titles."

Minnesota finished the season with a 12-2 log and was at home against Washington for the opening game of the playoffs. The Redskins led 7-3 at halftime, but after Carl Eller spiced a halftime locker room pep talk by nearly destroying a blackboard, the Vikings turned the game around with three second-half touchdowns, two of them passes from Tarkenton to John Gilliam in the final period for a 27-20 victory. Francis finished with 16 completions in 28 attempts for 222 yards. That put Tarkenton and the Vikings in the championship game against Dallas—a game for the NFC title and a chance to end those whispers about how no team could win the championship with Tarkenton at quarterback.

Francis ran the Vikings deliberately, grinding out the points against Dallas' formidable defense. After a 10-0 Minnesota halftime lead was chopped to three points on a 63-yard punt return by Golden Richards, Tarkenton restored the margin just over a minute later, hitting Gilliam on a 54-yard bomb. When the game was over, Tark had completed 10 of 21 passes for 133 yards and the scoreboard read Minnesota 27, Dallas 10. The Vikings were champions of the National Football Conference and their quarterback was the No. 1 celebrant in the dressing room.

"Maybe now they'll stop calling me a loser," he chortled. "Maybe now I've proven something."

Two weeks later, Tarkenton and the Vikings went into the Super Bowl against Miami. The key play of the game turned out to be the coin flip, won by the Dolphins. Miami took the ball and marched to a fast touchdown, putting seven points on the scoreboard before Tarkenton ever touched the football. The Vikings had one offensive series, and in three plays, Tarkenton moved them nine yards. It was fourth and one and Minnesota kicked. Before Tarkenton ever saw the football again, Miami had another touchdown and the scoreboard said 14-0. The Dolphins had two TDs and Tarkenton had handled the football exactly three times.

If Tarkenton had been able to pull the Vikings out of that hole, it would have been some kind of a miracle. He could not. "Francis faced many difficult situations," said Coach Bud Grant. "When you fall 14 points behind, they're going to keep you from throwing the ball much."

Tarkenton completed 18 of 28 attempts for 182 yards and scored Minnesota's only TD on a four-yard run in the fourth quarter. But by then, the game was settled with Miami comfortably on top.

Afterwards, Tarkenton was philosophical. "We lost three games all year," he said. "That's not bad. I'm proud of what we've accomplished."

If Tarkenton was proud of the Vikings, a day or so later he gave the Vikings reason to be proud of him. He announced that he was donating his \$7,500 Super Bowl share to charity, splitting it between Daytop Village, a drug rehabilitation program in New York, and the Minneapolis Association for Retarded Children.

"The game has been good to me financially," he said. "Sometimes, I feel a little awkward when I meet and talk with people who need. I mean, I look at my own life and say, 'It's exciting and good and prosperous.' Then I remember all the noble words about trying to ease the hardships of others. All of us try to help some time or other. But I think a person always has to ask himself, 'Do I share enough of myself?' I consider it a privilege to give in this way and I do it in the name of my Viking teammates as well as myself."

"I wish," the quarterback concluded, "that it could have been \$7,000 more."

Next year, maybe it will be.

GARO YEPREMIAN Earl Morrall, bent at the kicking tee, called signals. It was mid-July and the Miami Dolphins were in training camp. About seven yards behind Morrall stood an unlikely-looking football player. The sun shone down on Garo Yepremian's very bald head and the little placekicker from Cyprus squinted at the brightness.

Each time the ball was snapped to Morrall, Yepremian would step quickly forward on his bandy legs and kick the pigskin towards the goal post. Ten or 15 minutes into the drill, Morrall glanced over at the sidelines. There, Coach Don Shula nodded his head.

Again, Morrall called signals and took the snap. Yepremian advanced when, suddenly, the ball squirted away. Yepremian's eyes bulged. Panic! From the sidelines, Shula screamed, "Fall on it, Garo! Fall on it!"

Yepremian lunged forward and fielded the ball cleanly. Then he burst out laughing. Shades of Super Bowl VII. Quarterback Bob Griese trotted by at that moment with a grin creasing his face. "Atta boy, Garo. I won't kick the ball if you don't pass it."

Morrall's "fumble" was a put up job, a ploy designed by Shula to drill Yepremian on what the kicker should do in case his holder comes up with a case of butter-fingers. In Super Bowl VII, when the same thing happened, Garo scooped up the football and did the poorest imitation of a passer you ever saw. The subsequent recovery of the ball by Mike Bass gave Washington its only touchdown in a 14-7 loss to the Dolphins. It was Miami's only error in that game, and Shula was determined to eliminate the confusion for his kicker by

recreating the same panic-filled situation a few times in practice.

Yepremian's faux pas didn't matter because the Redskins couldn't catch the Dolphins in that game. And subsequently, it made him a popular after-dinner speaker. He even released a recording about it called "Yepremian's Lament." The flip side was a love song called "How to Tell You."

The record added another dimension to Yepremian, who is not the average, run-of-the-mill football hero. For one thing, there is his off-the-field venture. He designs and manufactures neckties, and more than once a headline writer has combined Garo's three-point accuracy and business interests to call Yepremian "The Little Old Tiemaker."

Fans often write to Yepremian requesting to buy one of his ties. "They enclose a check and a note saying, 'You pick out the tie for me,'" says Garo.

Making ties and kicking field goals seems like an unlikely combination, but then Garo hasn't exactly followed a traditional script on the road to success. He was born on the shores of the Mediterranean and when civil war broke out, his family fled to England. There, Garo worked at a variety of jobs including one in a fabric factory, where he tailored the tunics worn by the guards at Buckingham Palace. He also played semi-pro soccer and that torpedoed an athletic scholarship that Garo's brother Krykor had arranged for Garo at Butler University. That didn't deter Krykor, who learned that the Detroit Lions needed somebody to kick footballs for them and delivered the best soccer-style kicker he knew—his brother Garo.

Now Garo Yepremian had never seen a football game much less played in one. But he could kick and so the Lions signed him. "When I went out to kick for the first time, I didn't know a field goal from a touchdown. I asked somebody what you called what I had just done. An assistant coach came to me before my first game and said, 'Just kick the ball, we'll talk to you about the game afterwards.'"

Garo kicked—with elan. He led all Lion scorers and booted a record six field goals in one game. Yet, he never felt a real part of the team. Other players shunned the little foreigner. "My first year with Detroit, my job was to turn the lights on and off during the films," joked Garo. "I was also responsible for the air conditioner. I guess I did a bad job. I was fired."

Relegated to the taxi squad, Yepremian's spirit sagged. A year later, he was out of the game altogether. He retreated to the serenity of his basement, sewing ties. "Nobody wanted me," he said. For two years, he sewed and stewed. Then, one day, he met a Lion front-office official. They chatted for awhile and the subject of Yepremian's kicking came up. The little Cypriot said nobody would give him a chance, and his friend offered to write a recommendation for him.

"He wrote to Green Bay, San Diego, Buffalo and Miami," recalled Yepremian. "I received answers from everybody else saying they've got kickers and if they are in trouble, they will call me. Coach Shula called me and said to come try out."

That was the summer of 1970 and Yepremian won the job. He led the team in scoring that year and led the league in that department the next season.

Yepremian brings a simple philosophy to his job. "Sometimes you kick it perfect and it misses. Sometimes you kick it bad and it goes through. In all businesses, you have to have a little bit of luck. My kicking is all done with eye measure. I don't take so many steps back and so many steps to the side. I just stand where it looks right and I kick it. I can't boast that what I do is the most difficult thing in the world."

Still, Yepremian reacted with anger last year when critics began downgrading field goals, which were dominating the NFL. "It's one of the most exciting plays in the game," he insisted. He'll get no argument on that from the people who watched his 37-yard boot decide the longest game in pro football history, when the Dolphins defeated Kansas City in the 1971 playoffs after 22 minutes and 40 seconds of overtime.

That was the first of three straight Super Bowl years for the Dolphins, success due in no small part to their bald little kicker. Still, he was ignored for the Pro Bowl game in 1971, 1972 and 1973, and frankly, the snub bugged him. "You try your best and you do well, but people don't pick you because you don't have a big name," he said. "I feel I should have had a good chance of making it all three years. I think they (the coaches who choose the teams) should check more closely. They shouldn't go by a kicker's reputation but by the one who had the best year."

Finally, the oversight was rectified in last January's Pro Bowl Game. Yepremian was picked to kick for the American Conference and made up for lost time by booting five field goals to account for all the AFC points in a 15-13 victory.

Two straight winner's shares from the Super Bowl and acknowledgement as one of pro football's finest kickers haven't changed Yepremian. He still has both feet on the ground, except when he's swinging that left one into a football.

"My leg is stronger now than six years ago," he said. "I'm more experienced. I can concentrate more and I can adjust to conditions better . . . like wind, rain, a muddy field.

"I am no longer scared by what I do. I stand there and kick the football and I don't try to tackle anybody."

Obviously, here is a man who has learned his lesson. He leaves the other jobs on the field to the people whose jobs they are. Right? Wrong.

"Oh no," said Garo, a smile wrinkling his nose. "I don't tackle because I don't want to hurt them. I am 180 pounds and I stand 5-7 and I can be a tiger if I want to destroy somebody who weighs 286 and stands 6-9."

Garo, the tiger, usually controls himself pretty well so the behemoths don't have to worry . . . except about his foot, which has proven to be every bit as devastating with those funny-shaped footballs as they were in Cyprus and England with soccer balls.

THE COACHES' TOP PLAYS

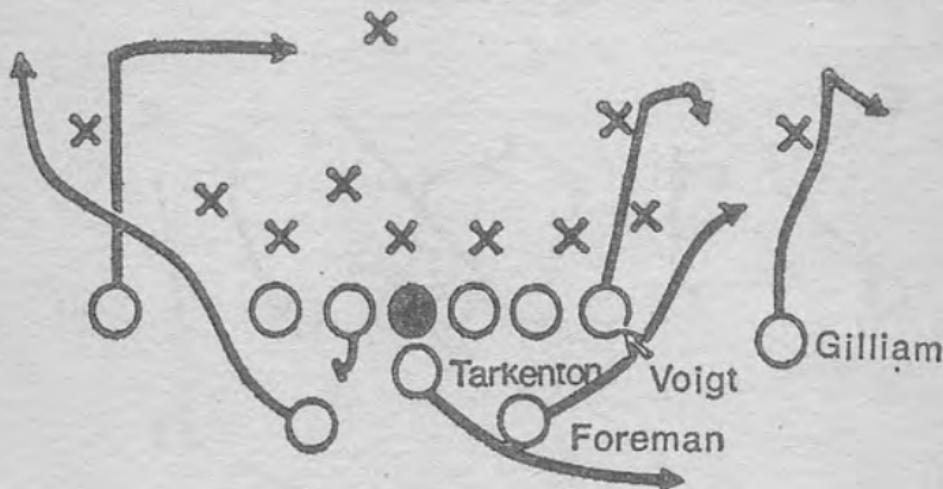
DON SHULA, Miami Dolphins

Here is Miami's basic fullback draw play, designed for the bruising Larry Csonka. It is a simple play that sends Csonka through the middle of the line with center Jim Langer leading the interference. This was the play Miami used repeatedly in marching to touchdowns the first two times it had the ball in the Super Bowl against Minnesota.



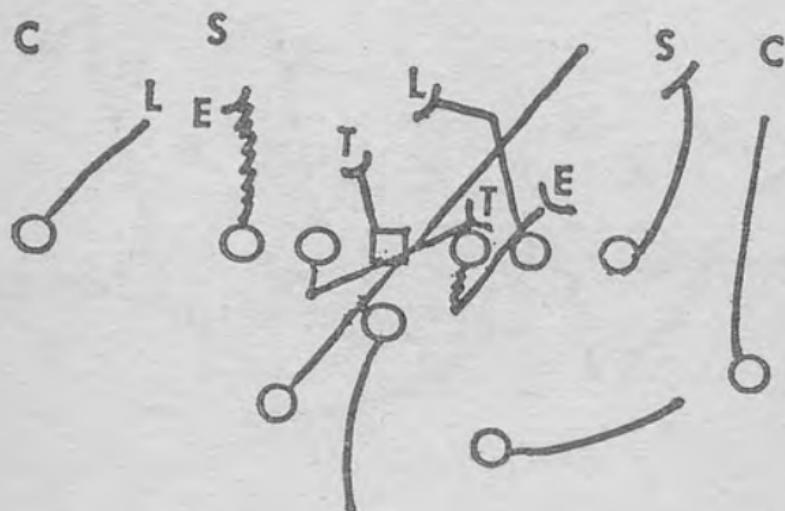
BUD GRANT, Minnesota Vikings

Fran Tarkenton is the kind of versatile quarterback who brings all kinds of options to an offense. The Vikings' rollout pass, diagrammed here, shows the choices Fran has when he calls this play. He has three potential receivers in John Gilliam, Stu Voigt and Chuck Foreman, and if they are covered, he can take off on one of his patented scrambles.



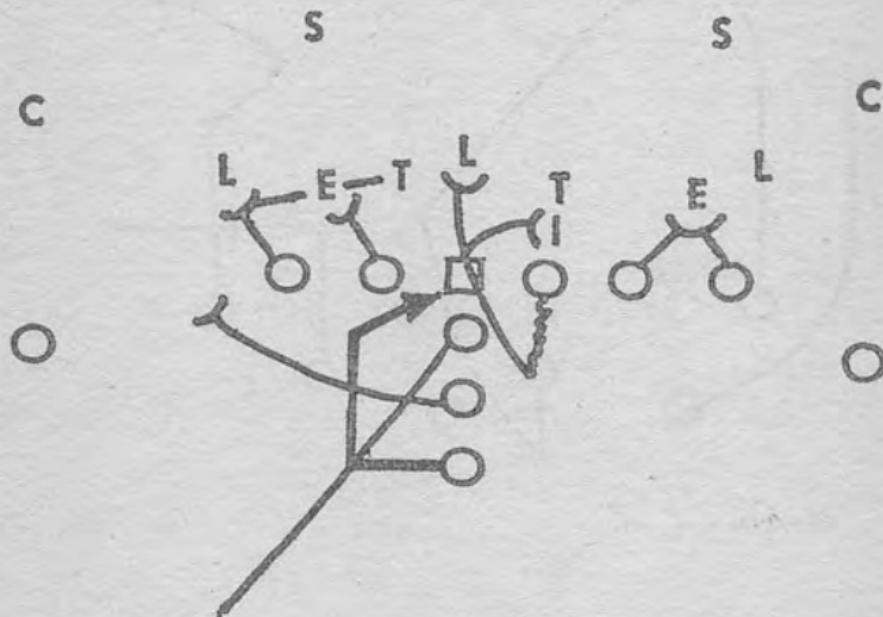
CHARLIE WINNER, New York Jets

When the Jets get close to paydirt, you will usually see them call this play, which appears in their playbook under "32-Trap." The 32 is Emerson Boozer's number. The trap is the job of right guard Dave Herman, who fakes a pass block and then drops back to pick up their opposing end. When the enemy tackle comes in for the "passer," left guard Randy Rasmussen pulls out to trap him, leaving the opening for Boozer.



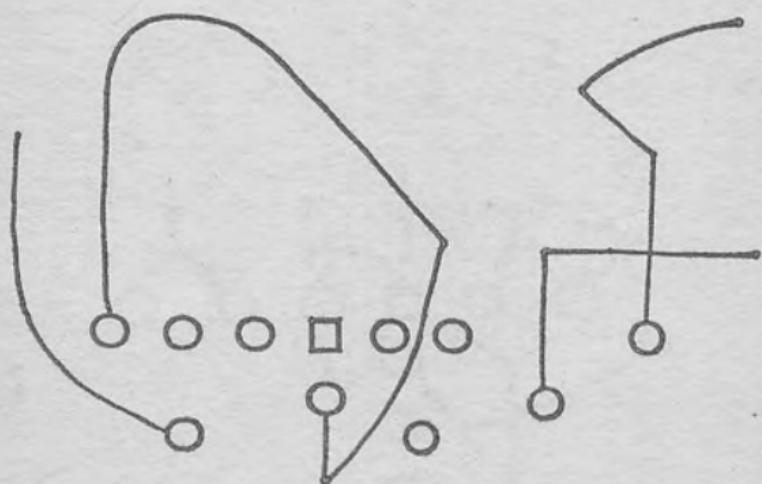
JOHN MADDEN, Oakland Raiders

This play is designed for Oakland's power-running Marv Hubbard, who barrels out of the backfield with the best of them. Guard Gene Upshaw and center Jim Otto, two outstanding veteran offensive linemen, open the hole after Hubbard fakes a pass pattern and cuts back to the middle.



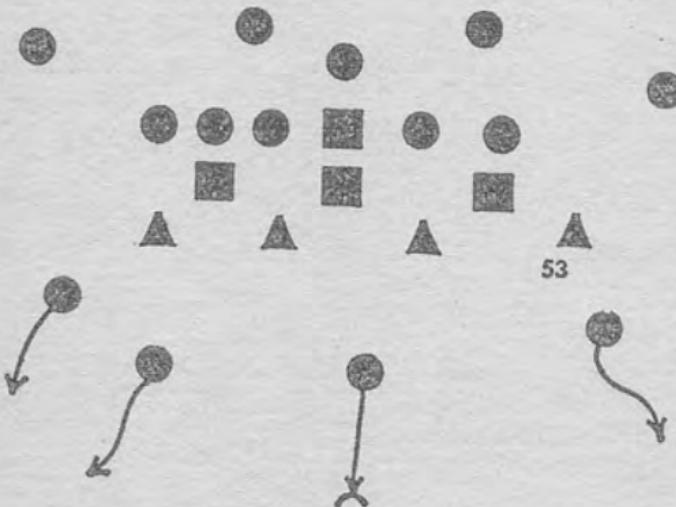
DICK NOLAN, San Francisco 49ers

In this pattern, designed for All-Pro tight end Ted Kwalick, the key to success is deception on the part of the other receivers. They must lure the coverage away from the inside, leaving Kwalick room to operate.



BILL ARNSPARGER, New York Giants

Here is the famous "53 Defense" which Bill introduced at Miami. No. 53 was linebacker Bob Matheson, the fourth linebacker, after whom the defense was named. In New York it might be the 58 defense after Jim Files or some other number, but opposing teams are likely to see some adaptation of it.



THE STATISTICS

FEATURED PLAYERS

JOHN BROCKINGTON

Born September 7, 1948 In Brooklyn, N.Y.

Height: 6-1 Weight: 225

College: Ohio State

First-Round Draft Choice, Green Bay Packers, 1971

	Rushing No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD
1971	216	1105	5.1	4
1972	274	1027	3.7	8
1973	265	1144	4.3	3
Totals	755	3276	4.4	15

LARRY CSONKA

Born December 25, 1946 In Stow, Ohio

Height: 6-3 Weight: 238

College: Syracuse University

First Round Draft Choice, Miami Dolphins, 1968

	Rushing No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD
1968	138	540	3.9	6
1969	131	566	4.3	2
1970	193	874	4.5	6
1971	195	1051	5.4	7
1972	213	1117	5.2	6
1973	219	1003	4.6	5
Totals	1089	5151	4.9	32

CARL ELLER

Born February 25, 1942 In Winston-Salem, N.C.

Height: 6-6 Weight: 250

College: Minnesota

First Round Draft Choice, Minnesota Vikings, 1964

CHUCK FOREMAN

Born October 26, 1950 In Frederick, Md.

Height: 6-2 Weight: 215

College: Miami of Fla.

First Round Draft Choice, Minnesota Vikings, 1973

	Rushing No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD
1973	182	801	4.4	4
Totals	182	801	4.4	4

ROMAN GABRIEL

Born August 5, 1940 In Wilmington, N.C.

Height: 6-4 Weight: 220

College: North Carolina State

First Round Draft Choice, Los Angeles Rams, 1962

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		Passing			
	Att.	Comp.	Yds.	Int.	TD
1962	101	57	670	2	3
1963	281	130	1947	11	5
1964	143	65	1236	5	9
1965	173	83	1321	5	11
1966	397	217	2540	16	10
1967	371	196	2779	13	25
1968	366	184	2364	16	19
1969	399	217	2549	7	24
1970	407	211	2552	12	16
1971	352	180	2238	10	17
1972	323	165	2027	15	12
1973	460	270	3219	12	23
Totals	3773	1975	25442	124	177

JOE GREENE

Born September 24, 1946 in Temple, Tex.

Height: 6-4 Weight: 270

College: North Texas State

First-Round Draft Choice, Pittsburgh Steelers, 1969

BOB GRIESE

Born February 3, 1945 in Evansville, Ind.

Height: 6-1 Weight: 190

College: Purdue

First Round Draft Choice, Miami Dolphins, 1967

		Passing			
	Att.	Comp.	Yds.	Int.	TD
1967	331	166	2005	18	15
1968	355	186	2473	16	21
1969	252	121	1695	16	10
1970	245	142	2019	17	12
1971	263	145	2089	9	19
1972	97	53	638	4	4
1973	218	116	1422	8	17
Totals	1761	929	12341	88	98

JOHN HADL

Born February 15, 1940 in Lawrence, Kan.

Height: 6-1 Weight: 214

College: Kansas

Third Round Draft Choice, San Diego Chargers, 1961

	Att.	Comp.	Yds.	Int.	TD
1962	260	107	1632	24	15
1963	64	28	502	6	6
1964	274	147	2157	15	18
1965	348	174	2798	21	20
1966	375	200	2846	14	23
1967	427	217	3365	22	24
1968	440	208	3473	32	27
1969	324	158	2253	11	10
1970	327	162	2388	15	22
1971	431	233	3075	25	21
1972	370	190	2449	26	15
1973	258	135	2008	11	22
Totals	3898	1959	28946	222	223

CALVIN HILL

Born January 2, 1947 in Riverdale, N.Y.

Height: 6-4 Weight: 227

College: Yale

First Round Draft Choice, Dallas Cowboys, 1969

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Rushing

	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD
1969	204	942	4.6	8
1970	153	577	3.8	4
1971	106	468	4.4	8
1972	245	1036	4.2	6
1973	273	1142	4.2	3
Totals	981	4165	4.3	29

CLAUDE HUMPHREY

Born June 29, 1944 in Memphis, Tenn.

Height: 5-5 Weight: 255

College: Tennessee State

First-Round Draft Choice, Atlanta Falcons, 1968

HAROLD JACKSON

Born January 6, 1946 in Hattiesburg, Miss.

Height: 5-10 Weight: 170

College: Jackson State

Twelfth-Round Draft Choice, Los Angeles Rams, 1968

Receiving

	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD
1969	65	1116	17.2	9
1970	41	613	14.9	5
1971	47	716	15.2	3
1972	62	1048	16.7	4
1973	40	874	21.9	13
Totals	255	4367	17.2	34

O. J. SIMPSON

Born July 9, 1947 in San Francisco, Calif.

Height: 6-2 Weight: 214

College: Southern California

First-Round Draft Choice, Buffalo Bills, 1969

Rushing

	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD
1969	181	697	3.9	2
1970	120	488	4.1	5
1971	183	742	4.1	5
1972	292	1251	4.3	6
1973	332	2003	6.0	12
Totals	1108	5181	4.5	30

KEN STABLER

Born Dec. 25, 1945 in Foley, Ala.

Height: 6-3 Weight: 215

College: Alabama

Second Round Draft Choice, Oakland Raiders, 1968

Passing

	Att.	Comp.	Yds.	Int.	TD
1970	7	2	52	1	0
1971	48	24	268	4	1
1972	74	44	524	3	4
1973	260	163	1997	10	14
Totals	389	233	2841	18	19

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FRAN TARKENTON

Born February 3, 1940 in Richmond, Va.

Height: 6-0 Weight: 190

College: Georgia

Third round Draft Choice, Minnesota Vikings, 1961

		Passing				
	Att.	Comp.	Yds.	Int.	TD	
1961	280	157	1997	17	18	
1962	329	163	2595	25	22	
1963	297	170	2311	15	15	
1964	306	171	2506	11	22	
1965	329	171	2609	11	19	
1966	358	192	2561	16	17	
1967	377	204	3088	16	29	
1968	337	182	2555	12	21	
1969	409	220	2918	12	23	
1970	389	219	2777	12	19	
1971	986	226	2567	21	11	
1972	378	215	2651	13	18	
1973	274	169	2113	7	15	
Totals	4449	2459	33363	187	249	

GARO YEPREMIAN

Born June 2, 1944 in Cyprus

Height: 5-8 Weight: 175

College: None

Signed as free agent, 1970

		Kicking				
		PAT	FG(L)		Pts.	
1966		11-11	13-22 (44)		50	
1967		22-23	2-6 (33)		28	
1968-1969			(NONE)			
1970		31-31	22-97 (47)		97	
1971		33-33	28-40 (48)		117	
1972		43-45	24-37 (54)		115	
1973		38-38	25-37 (53)		113	
Totals		178-181	114-171(54)		520	

1973 CHAMPIONSHIP SUMMARIES THE SUPER BOWL

Sunday, January 13, 1974, at Houston

Minnesota Vikings	0	0	0	7	— 7
Miami Dolphins	14	3	7	0	— 24
Miami—Csonka, 5-yard run (Yepremian kick)					
Miami—Klick, 1-yard run (Yepremian kick)					
Miami—Field goal Yepremian, 28 yards					
Miami—Csonka, 2-yard run (Yepremian kick)					
Minnesota—Tarkenton, 4-yard run (Cox kick)					
Attendance—68,142					

TEAM STATISTICS

Vikings	Dolphins
14	21
5	13
8	4
1	4
238	259
72	196
166	63
28	7
18	6
1	0
2	1
16	10
24	53
3.0	3.7
54	61
4.4	4.2
5	3
42.2	39.6
0	3
0	20
4	2
69	47
7	1
65	4
2	1
1	0

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing, Minnesota—Reed, 11 carries for 32 yards; Foreman, 7-18; Tarkenton, 4-17, 1 TD; Marinaro, 1-3; B. Brown, 1-2.

Rushing, Miami—Csonka, 33 carries for 145 yards, 2 TDs; Morris, 11-34; Kick, 7-10, 1 TD; Griese, 2-7.

Passing, Minnesota—Tarkenton, 18 completions in 28 attempts for 182 yards.

Passing, Miami—Griese, 6 completions in 7 attempts for 73 yards.

Pass Receiving, Minnesota—Foreman, 5 catches for 27 yards; Gilliam, 4-44; Voight, 3-46; Marinaro, 2-39; Kingsriter, 1-9; Lash, 1-9; B. Brown, 1-9; Reed, 1-(—1).

Pass Receiving, Miami—Warfield, 2-33; Mandich, 2-31; Briscoe, 2-19.

Punting, Minnesota—Elscheld, 5 for 42.2 average.

Punting, Miami—Seiple, 3 for 39.6 average.

Punt Returns, Minnesota—None.

Punt Returns, Miami—Scott, 3 for 20 yards.

Kickoff Returns, Minnesota—Gilliam 2 for 41 yards; West 2 for 28 yards.

Kickoff Returns, Miami—Scott, 2 for 47 yards.

Interceptions, Minnesota—None.

Interceptions, Miami—Johnson, 1 for 10 yards.

NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

Sunday, December 30, 1973 at Irving, Texas

Minnesota Vikings	3	7	7	10	—27
Dallas Cowboys	0	0	10	0	—10
Minnesota—FG, Cox 44					
Minnesota—Foreman, 5 run (Cox kick)					
Dallas—Richards, 63 punt return (Fritsch kick)					
Minnesota—Gilliam, 54 pass from Tarkenton (Cox kick)					
Dallas—FG, Fritsch 17					
Minnesota—Bryant 63 interception (Cox kick)					
Minnesota—FG, Cox 34					

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TEAM STATISTICS

	Minnesota	Dallas
First Downs	20	9
Rushes—Yards	47-203	25-90
Passing Yards	103	63
Return Yards	76	1
Passes	10-21-4	10-21-4
Punts	3-43.3	4-39.5
Fumbles Lost	3	2
Yards Penalized	33	20

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing, Minnesota—Foreman, 19 carries for 76 yards; Reed, 18-75; Osborn, 4-7; Tarkenton, 4-16; Brown, 2-9.
 Rushing, Dallas—Newhouse, 14 carries for 50 yards; Staubach, 5-30; Garrison, 5-9; Fugett, 1-1.
 Passing, Minnesota—Tarkenton, 10 completions in 21 attempts for 133 yards, 1 interception.
 Passing, Dallas—Staubach, 10 completions in 21 attempts for 89 yards, 4 interceptions.
 Pass Receiving, Minnesota—Foreman, 4 for 28 yards; Gilliam, 2-63; Voight, 2-23; Lash, 1-11; Reed, 1-8.
 Pass Receiving, Dallas—Hayes, 2 for 25 yards; Pearson, 2-24; Montgomery, 2-15; Dupre, 1-20; Garrison, 1-10; Fugett, 1—(—1); Newhouse, 1—(—4).

AFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

Sunday, December 30, 1973 at Miami, Fla.

Oakland Raiders	0	0	10	0	—10
Miami Dolphins	7	7	3	10	—27
Miami—Csonka, 11 run (Yepremian kick)					
Miami—Csonka, 2 run (Yepremian kick)					
Oakland—FG, Blanda 21					
Miami—FG, Yepremian 42					
Oakland—25 pass from Stabler (Blanda kick)					
Miami—FG, Yepremian 26					
Miami—Csonka, 2 run (Yepremian kick)					

TEAM STATISTICS

	Oakland	Miami
First Downs	15	21
Rushes—Yards	26-107	53-266
Passing Yards	129	26
Return Yards	0	29
Passes	15-23-1	3-6-1
Punts	2-51.0	1-39.0
Fumbles Lost	0	0
Yards Penalized	35	26

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing, Oakland—Hubbard, 10 carries for 54 yards; Smith, 10-35; Davis, 4-15; Banaszak, 2-3.
 Rushing, Miami—Csonka, 29 carries for 117 yards; Morris, 14-86; Griese, 3-39; Kiick, 6-12; Nottingham, 1-12.
 Passing, Oakland—Stabler, 15 completions in 23 attempts for 129 yards, 1 interception.
 Passing, Miami—Griese, 3 completions in 6 attempts, for 34 yards, 1 interception.
 Pass Receiving, Oakland—Smith, 5 for 43 yards; Slanik, 3-45; Biletnikoff, 2-15; Hubbard, 2-11; Moore, 2-9; Davis, 1-6.
 Pass Receiving, Miami—Warfield, 1-27; Briscoe, 1-6; Kiick, 1-1.

1973 NFL AT A GLANCE

FINAL STANDINGS OF THE TEAMS
AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

	Eastern Division			Pct.	Pts.	OP
	W	L	T			
Miami	12	2	0	.857	343	150
Buffalo	9	5	0	.643	259	230
New England	5	9	0	.357	258	300
Baltimore	4	10	0	.286	226	341
N.Y. Jets	4	10	0	.286	240	306

	Central Division			Pct.	Pts.	OP
	W	L	T			
Cincinnati	10	4	0	.714	286	231
*Pittsburgh	10	4	0	.714	347	210
Cleveland	7	5	2	.571	234	255
Houston	1	13	0	.071	199	447

	Western Division			Pct.	Pts.	OP
	W	L	T			
Oakland	9	4	1	.679	292	175
Denver	7	5	2	.571	354	296
Kansas City	7	5	2	.571	231	192
San Diego	2	11	1	.179	188	386

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE
Eastern Division

	W	L	T	Pct.	Pts.	OP
Dallas	10	4	0	.714	382	203
*Washington	10	4	0	.714	325	198
Philadelphia	5	8	1	.393	310	393
St. Louis	4	9	1	.321	286	365
N.Y. Giants	2	11	1	.179	226	362

	Central Division			Pct.	Pts.	OP
	W	L	T			
Minnesota	12	2	0	.857	296	168
Detroit	6	7	1	.464	271	247
Green Bay	5	7	2	.429	202	259
Chicago	3	11	0	.214	195	334

	Western Division			Pct.	Pts.	OP
	W	L	T			
Los Angeles	12	2	0	.857	388	178
Atlanta	9	5	0	.643	318	224
New Orleans	5	9	0	.357	163	312
San Francisco	5	9	0	.357	262	319

*Wild Card for Playoffs

PLAYOFFS

NFC Divisional Playoff—Minnesota 27, Washington 20

NFC Divisional Playoff—Dallas 27, Los Angeles 16

AFC Divisional Playoff—Miami 34, Cincinnati 16

AFC Divisional Playoff—Oakland 33, Pittsburgh 14

NFC Championship—Minnesota 27, Dallas 10

AFC Championship—Miami 27, Oakland 10

Super Bowl—Miami 24, Minnesota 7

Pro Bowl—American Conference 15, National Conference 13

1973 NFL INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
Compiled by Elias Sports Bureau

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

LEADING SCORERS

TOUCHDOWNS

	TDs.	Rush.	Rec.	Ret.	Pts.
Little, Den.	13	12	1	0	78
Simpson, Buff.	12	12	0	0	72
Warfield, Mia.	11	0	11	0	66
Morris, Mia.	10	10	0	0	60
Shanklin, Pitt.	10	1	8	0	54
Moses, Ben.	9	1	8	0	54
Curtis, Cin.	9	0	9	0	54
Clark, Cin.	8	8	0	0	48
Holmes, S.D.	7	7	0	0	42
E. Johnson, Cin.	7	4	3	0	42
Odoms, Den.	7	0	7	0	42

KICKING

	EPA	FGA	LG	Pts.
Gereba, Pitt.	36.37	29-43	49	123
Yepremian, Mia.	38-38	25-37	53	113
Turner, Den.	40-40	22-33	50	106
Blanda, Oak.	31-31	23-33	49	100
Muhlmann, Cin.	31-32	21-31	51	94
Stenerud, K.C.	21-23	24-38	47	93
Cockroft, Clev.	24-24	22-31	45	90
Leyboldt, Buff.	27-27	21-30	52	90
Howfield, N.Y.	27-27	17-24	44	78
Hunt, Balt.	22-24	16-28	38	70
Butler, Hou.	21-21	15-24	49	66
White, N.E.	21-25	14-25	48	63

LEADING PASSERS

(140 attempts)

	Att.	Com.	Com.	Gnd.	Pass	TD	Pct.	LP	Int.	Int.	Avg.	Gain	Rating
Stabler, Oak.	260	163	62.7	1997	14	5.4	80	10	3.8	7.68	7.68	88.5	
Griese, Mia.	218	116	53.2	1422	17	7.8	46	8	3.7	6.52	6.52	84.2	
Anderson, Cin.	329	179	54.4	2428	18	5.5	78	12	3.6	7.38	7.38	81.5	
Johnson, Den.	346	184	53.2	2465	20	5.8	62	17	4.9	7.12	7.12	75.0	
Woodall, N.Y.	201	101	50.2	1228	9	4.5	56	8	4.0	6.11	6.11	67.7	
Plunkett, N.E.	376	193	51.3	2550	13	3.5	64	17	4.5	6.78	6.78	66.0	
Livingston, K.C.	145	65	44.8	916	6	4.1	48	7	4.8	6.32	6.32	59.4	
Domres, Balt.	191	93	48.7	1153	9	4.7	66	13	6.8	6.04	6.04	55.2	
Bradshaw, Pitt.	180	89	49.4	1183	10	5.6	67	15	8.3	6.57	6.57	54.7	
Phipps, Clev.	299	148	49.5	1719	9	3.0	51	20	6.7	5.75	5.75	49.4	
Pastorini, Hou.	290	154	53.1	1482	5	1.7	50	17	5.9	5.11	5.11	48.7	
Fouts, S.D.	194	87	44.8	1126	6	3.1	69	13	6.7	5.80	5.80	46.0	
Ferguson, Buff.	164	73	44.5	939	4	2.4	42	10	6.1	5.73	5.73	45.6	
Ferguson, Buff.	164	73	44.5	939	4	2.4	42	10	6.1	5.73	5.73	45.6	

Rating based on Pct. Com.; Pct. of TDs; Pct. of Int.; Avg. Yds. Gained

FOOTBALL STARS OF 1974 • 121

LEADING PASS RECEIVERS

	No.	Yards	Avg.	Long	TDs
Willis, Hou.	57	371	6.5	50	1
Podolak, K.C.	55	445	8.1	25	0
Rucker, N.E.	53	743	14.0	64	3
Biletnikoff, Oak.	48	660	13.8	32	4
Curtis, Cin.	45	843	18.7	77	9
Slan, Oak.	45	742	16.5	80	3
Clark, Cin.	45	347	7.7	39	0
Barkum, N.Y.	44	810	18.4	63	6
Odoms, Den.	43	629	14.6	47	7
Parks, Hou.	43	581	13.5	66	1
Burrough, Hou.	43	577	13.4	49	2
Little, Den.	41	423	10.3	50	1
Caster, N.Y.	35	593	16.9	49	4
Taylor, K.C.	34	565	16.6	46	4
Moore, Oak.	34	375	11.0	33	4

INTERCEPTION LEADERS

	No.	Yards	Long	TDs
Anderson, Mia.	8	163	38	2
Wagner, Pitt.	8	134	38	0
Edwards, Pitt.	6	186	86	1
Rowser, Pitt.	6	131	71	1
Bolton, N.E.	6	65	56	0
Harrison, Buff.	5	117	38	1
C. Scott, Clev.	5	71	45	1
Howard, S.D.	5	25	25	0

LEADING RUSHERS

	Att.	Yards	Avg.	Long	TDs
Simpson, Buff.	332	2003	6.0	80	12
Csonka, Mia.	219	1003	4.6	25	5
E. Jackson, Cin.	195	997	5.1	46	4
Clark, Cin.	254	988	3.9	26	8
Little, Den.	256	979	3.8	47	12
L. Mitchell, Balt.	253	963	3.8	36	2
Morris, Mia.	149	954	6.4	70	10
Hubbard, Oak.	193	903	4.7	50	6
Boozer, N.Y.	182	831	4.6	52	3
Podolak, K.C.	210	721	3.4	25	3
Dawkins, Den.	160	706	4.4	72	2
Harris, Pitt.	188	698	3.7	35	3
Smith, Oak.	173	682	3.9	19	4
Davis, Oak.	116	609	5.3	32	4
Edwards, S.D.	133	609	4.6	50	1

LEADING PUNTERS

	No.	Yards	Avg.	Long
Wilson, K.C.	80	3642	45.5	68
Guy, Oak.	69	3127	45.3	72
Van Heusen, Den.	69	3114	45.1	78
Seiple, Mia.	48	2031	42.3	57
Walden, Pitt.	62	2548	41.1	57
Partee, S.D.	72	2958	41.1	62
Lewis, Cin.	68	2790	41.0	60
Cockroft, Clev.	82	3321	40.5	71
Sp. Jones, Buff.	66	2660	40.3	62
Barnes, N.E.	55	2134	38.8	53
Lee, Balt.	62	2402	38.7	60
Butler, Hou.	36	1344	37.3	55
Fagan, N.Y.	74	2744	37.1	58

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PUNT RETURN LEADERS

	No.	Yards	Avg.	Long	TDs
Smith, S.D.	27	352	13.0	84	2
Thompson, Den.	30	366	12.2	53	0
Scott, Mia.	22	266	12.1	33	0
Pruitt, Clev.	16	180	11.3	46	0
Herron, N.E.	27	282	10.4	54	0
Edwards, Pitt.	34	336	9.9	44	0
Walker, Buff.	25	210	8.4	23	0
Atkinson, Oak.	41	336	8.2	63	1
Parrish, Cin.	25	200	8.0	47	0
Severson, Hou.	16	126	7.9	74	0
Casanova, Cin.	15	119	7.9	27	0
Farasopoulos, N.Y.	14	111	7.9	23	0
Haymond, Hou.	14	101	7.2	44	0
Marshall, K.C.	29	180	6.2	31	0
Laird, Balt.	15	72	4.8	13	0
Meyer, Pitt.	18	80	4.4	18	0

KICKOFF RETURN LEADERS

	No.	Yards	Avg.	Long	TDs
Francis, Buff.	23	687	29.9	101	2
Speyrer, Balt.	17	496	29.2	101	1
Pruitt, Clev.	16	453	28.3	54	0
Marshall, K.C.	14	391	27.9	38	0
Ste. Davis, Pitt.	15	404	26.9	48	0
Gresham, Hou.	27	723	26.8	103	1
Herron, N.E.	41	1092	26.6	92	1
Davis, Oak.	19	504	26.5	76	0
Smith, S.D.	36	947	26.3	70	0
Haymond, Hou.	28	703	25.1	47	0
Hudson, Oak.	14	350	25.0	36	0
Jackson, Cin.	21	520	24.8	41	0
Armstrong, Den.	20	472	23.6	50	0
Laird, Balt.	24	547	22.8	51	0
Lefear, Clev.	15	337	22.5	59	0
McGee, S.D.	20	423	21.2	50	0

NATIONAL CONFERENCE LEADING SCORERS

TOUCHDOWNS

	TDs.	Rush.	Rec.	Ret.	Pts.
Brown, Wash.	14	8	6	0	84
Anderson, St. L.	13	10	3	0	78
Jackson, L.A.	13	0	13	0	78
Ray, Atl.	11	9	2	0	66
Ron Johnson, N.Y.	9	6	3	0	54
Gilliam, Minn.	9	1	8	0	54
Carmichael, Phil.	9	0	9	0	54
V. Washington, S.F.	8	8	0	0	48
Garrison, Dall.	8	6	2	0	48

KICKING

	EPA	FGA	LG	Pts.
Ray, L.A.	40-42	30-47	48	130
Mike-Mayer, Atl.	34-34	26-38	52	112
Dempsey, Phill.	34-34	24-40	51	106
Gossett, S.F.	26-26	26-33	54	104
Knight, Wash.	37-37	22-42	42	103
Bakken, St. L.	31-31	23-32	46	100
Fritsch, Dall.	43-43	18-28	37	97
Cox, Minn.	33-33	21-35	41	96
Marcol, G.B.	19-20	21-35	46	82
Gogolak, N.Y.	25-25	17-28	45	76

FOOTBALL STARS OF 1974 • 123

LEADING PASSERS

(140 attempts)

	Att.	Com.	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Pct.	Pct.	Yds.	TD	LP	Int.	Int.	Gain	Avg.	Rating
	Com.	End.	Pass	TD			Com.	End.	Pass	TD					
Staubach, Dall.	286	179	62.6	2428	23	8.0	53	15	5.2	8.49	94.6				
Tarkenton, Minn.	274	169	61.7	2113	15	5.5	54	7	2.6	7.71	93.1				
Hadj, L.A.	258	135	52.3	2008	22	8.5	69	11	4.3	7.78	88.5				
Gabriel, Phil.	460	270	58.7	3219	23	5.0	80	12	2.6	7.00	86.0				
Kilmer, Wash.	227	122	53.7	1656	14	6.2	64	9	4.0	7.30	81.3				
Hart, St. L.	320	178	55.6	2223	15	4.7	69	10	3.1	6.95	80.1				
Lee, Atl.	230	120	52.2	1786	10	4.3	57	8	3.5	7.77	77.7				
Jurgensen, Wash.	145	87	60.0	904	6	4.1	36	5	3.4	6.23	77.6				
R. Johnson, N.Y.	177	99	55.9	1279	7	4.0	48	8	4.5	7.23	73.4				
Munson, Det.	185	95	51.4	1129	9	4.9	54	8	4.3	6.10	68.8				
Manning, N.O.	267	140	52.4	1642	10	3.7	65	12	4.5	6.15	65.0				
Douglass, Chi.	174	81	46.6	1057	5	2.9	63	7	4.0	6.07	59.2				
Spurrier, S.F.	157	83	52.9	882	4	2.5	58	7	4.5	5.62	59.2				
Brodie, S.F.	194	98	50.5	1126	3	1.5	66	12	6.2	5.80	47.5				
Snead, N.Y.	235	131	55.7	1483	7	3.0	46	22	9.4	6.31	45.6				

Rating based on Pct. Com.; Pct. of TDs; Pct. Int.; Avg. Yds. Gained

LEADING PASS RECEIVERS

No.	Yards	Avg.	Long	TDs
67	1116	16.7	73	9
59	801	13.6	53	7
55	854	15.5	80	6
50	681	13.6	33	5
50	322	6.4	29	1
47	729	15.5	48	5
43	520	12.1	46	2
42	907	21.6	54	8
42	403	9.6	80	3
41	600	14.6	42	1
41	595	14.5	36	1
41	409	10.0	44	3
40	874	21.9	69	13
40	482	12.1	64	6
37	606	16.4	58	2
37	593	16.0	48	2
37	460	12.4	54	1
37	362	9.8	35	2
37	316	8.5	35	0

INTERCEPTION LEADERS

No.	Yards	Long	TBs
7	105	46	1
6	99	24	0
6	78	31	1
6	32	22	0
6	30	22	0
5	161	68	1
5	123	27	1
5	112	44	0
5	104	42	0
5	82	38	0
5	62	24	0
5	52	26	0
5	38	30	0

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LEADING RUSHERS

	Att.	Yards	Avg.	Long	TDs
Brockington, G.B. _____	265	1144	4.3	53	3
Hill, Dall. _____	273	1142	4.2	21	6
McCutcheon, L.A. _____	210	1097	5.2	37	2
Hampton, Atl. _____	263	997	3.8	25	4
Sullivan, Phil. _____	217	968	4.5	37	4
Ron Johnson, N.Y. _____	260	902	3.5	29	6
Brown, Wash. _____	273	860	3.2	27	8
Bertelsen, L.A. _____	206	854	4.1	49	4
Foreman, Minne. _____	182	801	4.4	50	4
Taylor, Det. _____	176	719	4.1	34	5
Anderson, St. L. _____	167	679	4.1	54	10
Phillips, N.O. _____	198	663	3.3	20	0
Garrett, Chi. _____	175	655	3.7	35	5
Metcalf, St. L. _____	148	628	4.2	50	2

LEADING PUNTERS

	No.	Yards	Avg.	Long
Wittum, S.F. _____	79	3455	43.7	62
H. Weaver, Det. _____	54	2333	43.2	66
Widby, G.B. _____	56	2414	43.1	60
James, Atl. _____	63	2682	42.6	72
Blanchard, N.Y. _____	56	2347	41.9	62
O'Neal, N.O. _____	81	3375	41.7	71
Bateman, Dall. _____	55	2290	41.6	62
McNeill, Phil. _____	46	1881	40.9	66
Chappie, L.A. _____	51	2079	40.8	65
Green, Chi. _____	82	3321	40.5	62
Bragg, Wash. _____	64	2581	40.3	61
Eischold, Minn. _____	66	2628	39.8	57
Keithley, St. L. _____	66	2478	37.5	55

PUNT RETURN LEADERS

	No.	Yards	Avg.	Long	TDs
Taylor, S.F. _____	15	207	13.8	61	0
Stevens, N.O. _____	17	171	10.1	37	0
Bertelsen, L.A. _____	26	259	10.0	34	0
Brown, Atl. _____	40	360	9.0	57	0
Barney, Det. _____	27	231	8.6	42	0
Elmendorf, L.A. _____	22	187	8.5	30	0
McGill, S.F. _____	22	186	8.5	54	0
Duncan, Wash. _____	28	228	8.1	18	0
Athas, N.Y. _____	20	153	7.7	28	0
Richards, Dall. _____	21	139	6.6	46	0
Hill, Chi. _____	36	204	5.7	72	1
Bryant, Minn. _____	25	140	5.6	16	0
Staggers, G.B. _____	19	90	4.7	26	0

KICKOFF RETURN LEADERS

	No.	Yards	Avg.	Long	TDs
Garrett, Chi. _____	16	486	30.4	67	0
Mul-Key, Wash. _____	36	1011	28.1	97	1
Shy, St. L. _____	16	445	27.8	97	1
James, Phil. _____	16	413	25.8	36	0
McClanahan, Minn. _____	16	410	25.6	45	0
Houston, N.Y. _____	15	375	25.0	51	0
Jauron, Det. _____	17	405	23.8	33	0
Hill, Chi. _____	27	637	23.6	95	1
Thomas, G.B. _____	23	527	22.9	34	0
V. Washington, S.F. _____	24	549	22.9	38	0
Stevens, N.O. _____	26	590	22.7	48	0
Love, N.Y. _____	18	396	22.0	39	0
McGill, S.F. _____	17	374	22.0	43	0
Washington, Atl. _____	20	432	21.6	30	0

1973 NFL TEAM STATISTICS

	OFFENSE		Passing		Total	
	Rushing	Avg.	Yds.	Avg.	Yds.	Avg.
Los Angeles	2925	208.9(2)	1981	141.5(13)	4906	350.4
Philadelphia	1791	127.9(20)	2998	214.1(1)	4789	342.1
Oakland	2510	179.3(4)	2263	161.6(9)	4773	340.9
Dallas	2418	172.7(5)	2333	166.6(7)	4751	339.4
Cincinnati	2236	159.7(7)	2276	162.6(8)	4512	322.3
Denver	1954	139.6(14)	2519	179.9(3)	4473	319.5
Minnesota	2275	162.5(6)	1956	139.7(14)	4231	302.2
San Francisco	1743	124.5(21)	2481	177.2(4)	4224	301.7
Miami	2521	180.1(3)	1582	113.0(21)	4103	293.1
Miami	2521	180.1(3)	1582	113.0(21)	4103	293.1
Buffalo	3088	220.6(1)	997	71.2(26)	4085	291.8
Pittsburgh	2143	153.1(8)	1927	137.6(15)	4070	290.7
St. Louis	1671	119.4(22)	2383	170.2(5)	4054	289.6
Detroit	2133	152.4(9)	1913	136.6(17)	4046	289.0
N.Y. Giants	1478	105.6(24)	2561	182.9(2)	4039	288.5
Atlanta	2037	145.5(10)	2001	142.9(12)	4038	288.4
N.Y. Jets	1864	133.1(16)	2056	146.9(11)	3920	280.0
New England	1612	115.1(23)	2231	159.4(10)	3843	274.5
Washington	1439	102.8(25)	2358	168.4(6)	3797	271.2
San Diego	1814	129.6(18)	1808	129.1(18)	3662	258.7
Kansas City	1793	128.1(19)	1743	124.5(19)	3536	252.6
Baltimore	2031	145.1(11)	1475	105.4(22)	3506	250.4
New Orleans	1842	131.6(17)	1659	118.5(20)	3501	250.1
Cleveland	1968	140.6(13)	1373	98.1(23)	3341	238.6
Houston	1388	99.1(26)	1919	137.1(16)	3307	236.2
Green Bay	1973	140.9(12)	1283	91.6(24)	3256	232.6
Chicago	1907	136.2(15)	1222	87.3(25)	3129	223.5

	DEFENSE		Passing		Total	
	Rushing	Avg.	Yds.	Avg.	Yds.	Avg.
Los Angeles	1270	90.7(1)	1681	120.1(7)	2951	210.8
Oakland	1470	105.0(2)	1690	120.7(8)	3160	225.7
Miami	1991	142.2(12)	1290	92.1(1)	3281	234.4
Pittsburgh	1652	118.0(5)	1672	119.4(5)	3324	237.4
Dallas	1471	105.1(3)	1995	142.5(16)	3466	247.6
Atlanta	2129	152.1(18)	1430	102.1(3)	3559	254.2
Kansas City	1956	139.7(9)	1619	115.6(4)	3575	255.4
Cincinnati	1807	129.1(8)	1898	135.6(13)	3705	264.6
Washington	1603	114.5(4)	2176	155.4(18)	3779	269.9
Green Bay	1999	142.8(13)	1822	130.1(11)	3821	272.9
Cleveland	2091	149.4(15)	1736	124.0(9)	3827	273.4
Minnesota	1974	141.0(11)	1894	135.3(12)	3868	276.3
Detroit	2117	151.2(16)	1788	127.7(10)	3905	278.9
Buffalo	1797	128.4(7)	2118	151.3(17)	3915	279.6
N.Y. Giants	2174	155.3(19)	1985	141.8(15)	4159	297.1
N.Y. Jets	2228	159.1(20)	1950	139.3(14)	4178	298.4
Chicago	2509	179.2(25)	1674	119.6(6)	4183	298.8
New England	2850	203.6(26)	1338	95.6(2)	4188	299.1
Denver	1795	128.2(6)	2440	174.3(24)	4235	302.5
San Francisco	1963	140.2(10)	2366	169.0(22)	4329	309.2
Baltimore	2089	149.2(14)	2399	171.4(23)	4488	320.6
San Diego	2264	161.7(21)	2254	161.0(21)	4518	322.7
New Orleans	2402	171.6(22)	2178	155.6(19)	4580	327.1
Houston	2410	172.1(23)	2237	159.8(20)	4647	331.9
Philadelphia	2423	173.1(24)	2639	188.5(25)	5062	361.6
St. Louis	2120	151.4(17)	3029	216.4(26)	5149	367.8

Averages are per-game figures.

Numbers in parenthesis denote team's ranking within category.

1973 NFL STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS**PASSING**

NFC Leader—Roger Staubach, Dallas
 AFC Leader—Ken Stabler, Oakland
 NFC Most Attempts—Roman Gabriel, Philadelphia, 460
 AFC Most Attempts—Jim Plunkett, New England, 376
 NFC Most Completions—Roman Gabriel, Philadelphia, 270
 AFC Most Completions—Jim Plunkett, New England, 193
 NFC Completion Percentage—Roger Staubach, Dallas, 62.6
 AFC Completion Percentage—Ken Stabler, Oakland, 62.7
 NFC Most Yards Gained—Roman Gabriel, Philadelphia, 3,219
 AFC Most Yards Gained—Jim Plunkett, New England, 2,550
 NFC Touchdown Passes—Roger Staubach, Dallas and Roman Gabriel, Philadelphia, tied at 23
 AFC Touchdown Passes—Charley Johnson, Denver, 20
 NFC Lowest Percentage of Interceptions—John Brosie, San Francisco, 1.5
 AFC Lowest Percentage of Interceptions—Ken Anderson, Cincinnati, 3.6
 NFC Most Had Intercepted—Norm Snead, New York, 22
 AFC Most Had Intercepted—Mike Phipps, Cleveland, 20
 NFC Average Yards Gained—Roger Staubach, Dallas, 8.49
 AFC Average Yards Gained—Ken Stabler, Oakland, 7.68
 NFC Longest Completion—Greg Landry, Detroit, 84 yards to Ron Jessie, vs. Pittsburgh, Sept. 16
 AFC Longest Completion—Ken Stabler, Oakland, 80 yards to Mike Siani, vs. Denver, Oct. 22

RUSHING

NFC Leader—John Brockington, Green Bay, 1,144 yards
 AFC Leader—O.J. Simpson, Buffalo, 2,003 yards
 NFC Best Average—Larry McCutcheon, Los Angeles, 5.2 yards per carry
 AFC Best Average—O.J. Simpson, Buffalo, 6.0 yards per carry
 NFC Most Touchdowns—Donnie Anderson, St. Louis, 10
 AFC Most Touchdowns—O.J. Simpson, Buffalo and Floyd Little, Denver, tied at 12
 NFC Most Attempts—Calvin Dallas and Larry Brown, Washington, tied at 273
 AFC Most Attempts—O.J. Simpson, Buffalo, 332
 NFC Best One Game Performance—Alto Taylor, Detroit, 160 yards in 23 carries vs. Green Bay, Oct. 28
 AFC Best One Game Performance—O.J. Simpson, Buffalo, 250 yards in 29 carries vs. New England, Sept. 16
 NFC Longest Run—Tom Wittum, San Francisco, 63 yards vs. New Orleans, Oct. 21
 AFC Longest Run—O.J. Simpson, Buffalo, 80 yards vs. New England, Sept. 16

PASS RECEIVING

NFC Leader—Harold Carmichael, Philadelphia, 67
 AFC Leader—Fred Willis, Houston, 57
 NFC Most Yards Gained—Harold Carmichael, Philadelphia, 1,116
 AFC Most Yards Gained—Jerome Barkum, New York, 810
 NFC Most Touchdowns—Harold Jackson, Los Angeles, 13
 AFC Most Touchdowns—Isaac Curtis, Cincinnati, 9
 NFC Highest Average—Harold Jackson, Los Angeles, 21.9
 AFC Highest Average—Isaac Curtis, Cincinnati, 18.7
 NFC Longest Reception—Ron Jessie, Detroit, 84 yards vs. Pittsburgh, Sept. 16
 AFC Longest Reception—Mike Siani, Oakland, 80 yards vs. Denver, Oct. 22

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SCORING

NFC Leader—David Ray, Los Angeles, 130 points
AFC Leader—Roy Gerela, Pittsburgh, 123 points
NFC Most Touchdowns—Larry Brown, Washington, 14
AFC Most Touchdowns—Floyd Little, Denver, 13
NFC Most Extra Points—Toni Fritsch, Dallas, 43
AFC Most Extra Points—Jim Turner, Denver, 40
NFC Field Goals—David Ray, Los Angeles, 30
AFC Field Goals—Roy Gerla, Pittsburgh, 29
NFC Best One Game Performance—Harold Jackson, Los Angeles; Bobby Douglass, Chicago; Larry Brown, Washington; tied with 24 points (4 TDs)
AFC Best One Game Performance—Paul Warfield, Miami, 24 points (4 TDs)

PUNTING

NFC Leader—Tom Wittum, San Francisco, 43.7
AFC Leader—Jerrill Wilson, Kansas City, 45.5
NFC Most Punts—Bobby Joe Green, Chicago, 82
AFC Most Punts—Don Cockroft, Cleveland, 82
NFC Longest Punt—John James, Atlanta, 72 yards vs. New Orleans, Sept. 16
AFC Longest Punt—Bill Van Heusen, Denver, 78 yards vs. Dallas, Dec. 2

INTERCEPTIONS

NFC Leader—Bobby Bryant, Minnesota, 7
AFC Leader—Dick Anderson, Miami and Mike Wagner, Pittsburgh, tied at 8
NFC Most Interceptions Touchdowns—Bobby Bryant, Minnesota; Leroy Jordan, Dallas; Mike Bass, Washington; Brig Owens, Washington; 1 each
AFC Most Interceptions Touchdowns—Dick Anderson, Miami, 2
NFC Most Yards Gained—Mike Bass, Washington, 161
AFC Most Yards Gained—Glen Edwards, Pittsburgh, 186
NFC Longest Return—Dick Jauron, Detroit, 95 yards vs. Chicago, Nov. 18
AFC Longest Return—Joe Blahak, Houston, vs. Pittsburgh, Dec. 9

PUNT RETURNS

NFC Leader—Bruce Taylor, San Francisco, 13.8
AFC Leader—Ron Smith, San Diego, 13.0
NFC Most Yards Returned—Ray Brown, Atlanta, 360
AFC Most Yards Returned—Bill Thompson, Denver, 366
NFC Most Returns—Ray Brown, Atlanta, 40
AFC Most Returns—George Atkinson, Oakland, 41
NFC Longest Return—Ike Hill, Chicago, 72 yards vs. Green Bay, Nov. 4
AFC Longest Return—Ron Smith, San Diego, 84 yards vs. New Orleans, Nov. 18
NFC Touchdown Returns—Ike Hill, Chicago, 1
AFC Touchdown Returns—Ron Smith, San Diego, 2

KICKOFF RETURNS

NFC Leader—Carl Garrett, Chicago, 30.4
AFC Leader—Wallace Francis, Buffalo, 29.9
NFC Most Yards Returned—Herb Mul-Key, Washington, 1,011
AFC Most Yards Returned—Mack Herron, New England, 1,092
NFC Most Returns—Herb Mul-Key, Washington, 36
AFC Most Returns—Mack Herron, New England, 41
NFC Longest Return—Herb Mul-Key, Washington and Don Shy, St. Louis, tied at 97 yards. Mul-Key vs. St. Louis, Sept. 23, Shy vs. Washington, Sept. 23
AFC Longest Return—Bob Gresham, Houston, 103 yards vs. Cincinnati, Sept. 23
NFC Touchdown Returns—Herb Mul-Key, Washington; Don Shy, St. Louis; Ike Hill, Chicago; 1 each.
AFC Touchdown Returns—Wallace Francis, Buffalo, 2

1973 NFL ALL-STAR SELECTIONS

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS OFFENSE

Wide Receivers—Harold Jackson, Los Angeles; Paul Warfield, Miami
Tight End—Charles Young, Philadelphia
Tackles—Ron Yary, Minnesota; Rayfield Wright, Dallas
Guards—Larry Little, Miami; Reggie McKenzie, Buffalo
Center—Forest Blue, San Francisco
Quarterback—John Hadl, Los Angeles
Running Backs—O.J. Simpson, Buffalo; Larry Csonka, Miami
Placekicker—Garo Yepremian, Miami

DEFENSE

Ends—Claude Humphrey, Atlanta; Carl Eller, Minnesota
Tackles—Joe Greene, Pittsburgh; Alan Page, Minnesota
Outside Linebackers—Islah Robertson, Los Angeles; Chris Hanburger, Washington
Middle Linebacker—Willie Lanier, Kansas City
Safeties—Dick Anderson, Miami; Jake Scott, Miami
Cornerbacks—Robert James, Buffalo; Willie Brown, Oakland





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